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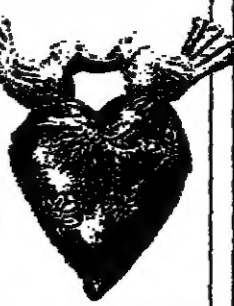
BEST FOR BOOKS

Nicholas Wapshott on Audrey Hepburn
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HEARTS AND HORMONES

Dr Stuttford on aphrodisiacs for Valentine's Day, PAGE 18



BEST FOR JOBS

THE TIMES
Jobs section

WANTED

Manager.....70K
Buyer.....55K
Analyst.....30K
Graduate.....18K
APPOINTMENTS
30-PAGE SECTION

Bounty on Rushdie raised to \$2.5m



Rushdie: "cost of living increase" in reward

BY MICHAEL BYRON, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR, AND MICHAEL THEODOULOU IN NICOSIA
A SHADOWY Iranian foundation yesterday increased the reward for the murder of Salman Rushdie by \$500,000 to \$2.5 million (£1.53 million) and said that even non-Muslims would be eligible to collect the bounty.
Britain swiftly denounced the move as an "outrageous infringement" of the British author's fundamental rights and rejected attempts by President Rafsanjani to distance his Government from the offer.
The Foreign Office dismissed suggestions that the 15 Khordad Foundation, a Com-based charitable trust, was independent and said: "We call on President Rafsanjani specifically to condemn the bounty and to provide the European Union with those written assurances which we seek."

Mr Rushdie, who has been under threat of death since the late Ayatollah Khomeini proclaimed a *fatwa* over his book *The Satanic Verses* on February 14, 1989, described the bigger reward as "just a cost of living increase". But he said it showed how Europe's attempts to negotiate with the "gangster state" had been a complete failure. He urged European politicians to stop "bending over backwards" to appease Iran.
In fact, relations between Iran and the West have taken a rapid turn for the worse and the EU is about to abandon its "critical dialogue" with Tehran, believing that it has achieved nothing.
President Rafsanjani said yesterday that he did not foresee any easing in Iran's strained relations with America, while a senior Iranian official in London said Tehran had no time for a dialogue with Europe and would concentrate on fellow Muslim countries.
The increase in the bounty was announced in the hardline *Jomhuri* newspaper, which reported Ayatollah Sheikh Hassan Saanei, the head of the 15 Khordad Foundation, as saying that anyone who killed the "apostate" writer could claim the reward, including non-Muslims and his bodyguards.
The International Rushdie Defence Committee said the new offer increased its concern. "Obviously we are alarmed," the group's secretary, Carmel Bedford, said. But Rushdie denied reports that his security had already been stepped up. It was already tight, and there was no pressure on him to retreat. "My view is that you don't defeat such threats by running away. It is important to show that life goes on," President Rafsanjani insisted that the foundation's move did not concern his Government. "I don't know what their motive was, but the government's policy towards the (Rushdie affair) is the same as before, and one which we have repeatedly announced," he said.
But Britain has been increasingly concerned at the level of killings by Iranian agents overseas, and is now pressing for a sharp signal to Tehran that it must curb terrorism. Although not supporting the sanctions demanded by Washington, the Government has moved closer to the American view that Iran is a main sponsor of international terrorism and a danger to world peace.
Britain's condemnation of Iran over the Rushdie bounty was supported by its European partners, and the Government will find powerful support for a tougher line. Germany, in particular, is disillusioned with the results of its controversial political opening to Iran. Prosecutors at a trial in Berlin have accused the Iranian Government of ordering the killings of
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Labour tries to force vote of confidence

BY JILL SHERMAN AND PHILIP WEBSTER

THE Labour Party is attempting to force a vote of confidence in the Government by forcing a critical vote that could lead to a confidence vote.
Labour will call on Monday for Douglas Hogg to be sacked as Agriculture Minister over his handling of the BSE crisis. If the Opposition wins, it would be under pressure to hold a confidence vote the next day, possibly triggering a general election.
However, the Government is not yet in a minority and so should not lose - even if the Ulster Unionists, who are deeply unhappy about the fallout from "mad cow" disease, voted with Labour. Ministers were confident last night that they would see off the threat by bringing all Conservative MPs to the Commons.
A party spokesman said: "Parliament has had ample opportunity to discuss this issue and the Government is taking forward policies to deal with this complicated issue in a sensible manner. In stark contrast, Labour are indulging in parliamentary gimmicks and personality politics."
Labour would have preferred to call the vote after the Wirral South by-election on February 27, when the Government is expected to go into a minority. But Monday is the last chance for an Opposition debate and the Shadow Cabinet decided last night to use it on an issue that unites most other parties against the Government. The motion will demand a cut in Mr Hogg's salary - a device used to signal that the minister should be dismissed.
Labour is relying on support from the Ulster Unionists, but it will also need to get at least one Tory and all the opposition parties voting with it to win. If both sides muster all their forces - and there appeared little likelihood that

Chancellor rejects Bank's rate call

Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, made it clear that he intends to continue defying the Bank of England's demands for higher interest rates. The Bank repeated its call for a modest rise in rates to meet the Government's inflation target of 2.5 per cent.
Unemployment fell sharply by 67,800 in January, leaving Britain's unemployment rate at 6.5 per cent, its lowest level since December 1990.
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Douglas Hogg to account for the £3 billion his Government's incompetence has cost Britain.
The nine Ulster Unionists said that they would make a decision on how they would vote at a meeting just before the division on Monday night. They are all expected to vote together. Party sources said that they were still aggrieved about the BSE crisis, but recent concerns had been centred more on the National Farmers' Union - which had resisted mass slaughter - than on Mr Hogg's performance.
One source said that the party was ready for a general election and would not be bothered if a confidence vote was held immediately. "We will have to weigh it up closely."
However John Taylor, deputy leader of the party, later made clear that the price for Ulster Unionist support in a confidence motion would be for the Government to offer the same terms for a Northern Ireland grand committee as those for the grand committee for Wales and Scotland.
The Shadow Cabinet's decision to call the confidence vote came amid the widespread assumption that Mr Hogg had decided to call the election on May 1. His last opportunity for calling the poll on March 20 - and calling off the Wirral by-election - is the middle of next week, but ministers say that he now accepts that to do so would be an act of panic.
Labour party sources emphasised last night that Tony Blair would not attempt a vote of no confidence unless he was certain that he would win. But he would face charges of cowardice if he failed to do so after a win on Monday night.
Labour also pointed out that the last time a confidence motion against a minister was successful was 102 years ago.



Lucy Winkett, the first woman priest appointed by St Paul's, on her ordination day

St Paul's row on woman priest

BY RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

A CANON at St Paul's Cathedral yesterday attacked the appointment of the cathedral's first woman priest as "typical of the liberal agenda" and said he will boycott communion services whenever the Rev Lucy Winkett, 29, is presiding.
Canon John Halliburton, the chancellor of St Paul's, said: "I don't believe her to be a priest." Her appointment brought "impaired communion" into the heart of the cathedral. "I have nothing against women," he added. "Their gender does not worry me at all. She is a very sweet girl."
Canon Halliburton, who abstained when the cathedral's dean and chapter voted to appoint Miss Winkett, said his objection was based on a question of authority. He believed the Church of England had no right to ordain women priests, when the majority of Christians, such as the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches, ordained men only.
Miss Winkett's appointment as a minor canon at the

cathedral was defended by the Dean, the Very Rev Dr John Moses, who joined the cathedral staff last November after the retirement of the late Dr Eric Evans, a traditionalist. Dean Moses said he was a supporter of women priests, but added: "We are not playing gender politics. We appointed her because she was the best candidate for the post."
Dr Moses, who confessed to being "almost tone deaf", said it was Miss Winkett's remark: "Cancel the pizza - let's have a Chinese" Continued on page 2, col 1

cancel the pizza - let's have a Chinese"

Soldier killed at checkpoint by IRA sniper

BY NICHOLAS WATT, CHIEF IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

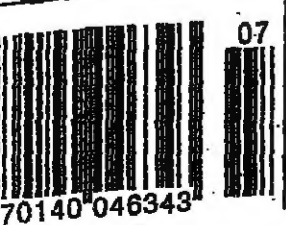
AN IRA sniper killed a soldier before the evil men responsible recognise the utter futility of their terrorism? Meanwhile the total hypocrisy of Sinn Féin's talk of peace is yet again fully exposed.
"Let me make two promises tonight: there will be no hiding place for the culprits - none at all - and I will not be deflected from the real search for a lasting settlement and peace in Northern Ireland."
John Bruton, the Irish Prime Minister, said the killing was an outrage, adding: "The IRA campaign is anti-Irish and contrary to the interests of all in Ireland."
Sir Patrick Maynew described the shooting as a "coward's attack" which pointed up the cynical contrast between words of peace and crimes of terrorism. He added that the IRA showed wanton indifference to their victims.
The shooting came after a series of mortar and grenade attacks on the security forces, which the IRA said last week was not a phoney war. The terrorists also said that a new ceasefire was "most unlikely" before the general election.

more victims must there be before the evil men responsible recognise the utter futility of their terrorism? Meanwhile the total hypocrisy of Sinn Féin's talk of peace is yet again fully exposed.
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Lorries trapped

Scores of British lorry drivers were trapped in Spain as an increasingly violent strike by Spanish truckers closed most of the country's northern motorways. Page 17

The Times on the Internet
http://www.the-times.co.uk



BT staff dial £10 Concorde win

BY GLEN OWEN AND STEPHEN FARRELL

TWO British Telecom staff working in the same office were among the 190 people who beat 30 million callers for a British Airways offer of £10 Concorde seats which normally cost £5,400.
Experts called for BT staff to be excluded from future competitions, claiming that some might have access to inside information which could improve their chances.
But British Telecom said Tuesday's call-in offer was a

genuine "lottery" with callers given an equal chance to win. A spokesman said there would not be an investigation without evidence of wrongdoing.
One of the BT winners, Neville Secular, 25, a computer operator based in offices at Holborn, central London, insisted he had simply dialled in the usual way.
"I tried the number a couple of times before 10 o'clock but they were playing a recorded message telling me to call later. I put the speaking clock on, so I knew exactly when to try again, using the redial

button on my phone," he said, adding that his colleague had done likewise. "Some might think that we found some way round it, but it is not true. My colleague is not in today, he is probably getting ready to pack," said Mr Secular, who will fly out with his fiancée, Helen McCarthy, on Valentine's Day.
Of the 30 million attempted calls recorded by British Airways switchboard between 9pm and midnight, 20 million were made between 9.50 and 10.15. Two million calls came from abroad.



England lose vital World Cup game

ENGLAND faltered in their campaign to qualify for the World Cup last night when they lost 0-1 to Italy at Wembley. Zola scored after 18 minutes. Despite almost constant pressure in the second half England failed to break through.
England still head group 2 but they have played a game more than Italy, who have the same number of points.

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Those Chinese chaps had better jolly well behave

I will do such things. — What they are yet I know not. — but they shall be The terrors of the earth.

Jeremy Hanley, Minister of State at the Foreign Office, makes an unlikely King Lear — he is about as tragic as roast beef and Yorkshire pudding — but found himself in need of such an impression yesterday. He was challenged to say what Britain would do if China tears up the Basic Law safeguards Britain has agreed with China for the protection of Hong Kong.

Commons rumblings about Governor Patten's democratisation have virtually ceased. Opinion at Westminster is hardening in his support.

As MPs see it, by setting up a puppet legislature for Hong Kong, Beijing has put itself beyond the pale. MPs look beyond June 30, fear the worst and wonder how they will answer the question "What did you do before the Atrocities, Daddy, to support democracy?" So they come to Foreign Office Questions and wave their tiny fists at the People's Republic.

"Everybody here expects China to honour its obligations," said Labour spokesman Derek Fatchett. What would the Government do about Chinese misbehaviour?

"I made a formal protest to the Chinese Ambassador last Thursday," declared Mr Hanley, stoutly. One was reassured, of course. Still,



MATTHEW PARRIS
POLITICAL SKETCH

one reflected that, after many millennia of earthquakes, after the Mongol hordes and the Great Wall, after the Opium Wars, the sacking of Shanghai, the Long March and the Cultural Revolution, it did seem just possible that China might not crumble in the face of a protest from Mr Jeremy Hanley last Thursday.

Mr Hanley is a rather good Minister of State, cheery, decent sounding, well-briefed and enthusiastic. But it never quite escapes our suspicion that he may have missed

his métier as a jolly television figure in a white apron, advertising Bernard Matthews Norfolk Turkeys, perhaps, or Bisto gravy mix, or Paxo stuffing. The thought of the Chinese Ambassador quailing before him and promising to reverse Beijing's policy towards Hong Kong took a little getting used to.

The mournfully expert David Howell (C, Guildford) reminded Hanley that Britain's 1984 agreement with China guaranteed Hong Kong's system of government. What

steps was Britain taking to insist on this? These were important problems, said Mr Hanley, sturdily. "It is right that we query them — and query them with great resolve!"

Indeed, in our mind's eye we pictured the scene in the Forbidden City as messengers arrive with momentous news from the West: "Grim tidings from London, your excellency, Mister Hanley is querying with great resolve."

Noticing that Mr Howell looked unconvinced by this assurance, the minister added: "We will continue to press the Chinese." That's all right, then. Even as he spoke, we could sense the Hong Kong dollar surge on the foreign exchanges.

David Evans (C, Welwyn and

Hatfield) picked on an easier foe. Assuring us that "while the Conservatives are in office, the Union Jack will continue to fly over Gibraltar", Mr Evans accused Labour ("that lot over there") of planning to "give away the Rock and its monkeys" to Spain. "But it takes a monkey to recognise one!" yelled the MP, mysteriously.

What could he mean? Was self-knowledge dawning, at last, on Mr Evans? Labour's Andrew Mackinlay suggested that Gibraltar should elect an MP at Westminster. It struck us that, should the apes wish to send us a representative, no new election is necessary. The good people of Welwyn have sent one already.

Albright postpones symbolic meeting with Ulster Secretary

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX
IN WASHINGTON
AND NICHOLAS WATT

A MEETING between Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State, and Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland Secretary, which was scheduled for next week to discuss the peace process, now appears unlikely to take place.

The meeting was postponed after a report in *The Times* that President Clinton was about to make a decisive shift in his policy on Northern Ireland. It said that the proposed meeting with Sir Patrick was intended to give more emphasis to backing the British and Irish Governments while slapping down Jean Kennedy Smith, the American Ambassador to Ireland.

White House officials emphasised yesterday that Northern Ireland will be high on the agenda when Ms Albright meets John Major on Tuesday. But ministers were disappointed that the US Administration had backed away from a symbolically important meeting with Sir Patrick. However, senior government figures said that they remained confident of a marked shift in support for the British stance in dealing with Sinn Féin and the IRA.

A spokesman said: "The request for the meeting came from the American side and the Secretary of State was quite willing to meet Ms



Kennedy Smith stays as Dublin ambassador

Albright. Now the American side are saying that their schedule in London is too tight. We are still looking forward to a meeting with Ms Albright as soon as it is possible."

Clinton Administration officials were anxious yesterday to dismiss reports that they had begun to adopt a more wary approach towards the aspirations of Sinn Féin, the political wing of the IRA. But there have also been indications that they are irritated by a series of reports in British newspapers critical of American officials involved in the peace process.

White House officials said yesterday that the peace process was close to Mr Clinton's heart and that "it remains the

President's policy, no one else's". Primary responsibility for the policy would remain with the National Security Council rather than the State Department.

The Irish Government, which pressed for Jean Kennedy Smith to remain as Ambassador to Dublin after *The Times* reported that she was to be moved, yesterday welcomed the news that she would remain at her post. A government spokesman said: "Mrs Kennedy Smith has been part of an administration that has been very supportive of the Irish Government in its efforts to bring peace to Northern Ireland. She enjoys the support and confidence of the Government."

The "green lobby" swung into action in her support on both sides of the Atlantic after *The Times* reported that President Clinton was planning to replace her. John Bruton, Ireland's Prime Minister, sang her praises in his parliament as his Government pressed for her to remain in Dublin. Irish diplomats in Washington reiterated the Taoiseach's remarks and made clear to the Administration that Dublin saw the ambassador's contacts with Sinn Féin as a key element in trying to rebuild the peace process.

The diplomatic efforts were strengthened by Irish-Americans on Capitol Hill who threw their weight behind President Kennedy's younger



Madeleine Albright will discuss Northern Ireland when she meets Mr Major

sister, Peter King, the Democratic congressman, questioned Ms Albright about Mrs Kennedy Smith at a congressional hearing on Tuesday. The new Secretary of State highlighted the power of the

"green lobby" when she responded that Mrs Kennedy Smith was not being recalled. The ambassador made clear on Tuesday that she wanted to remain in Dublin when, after a meeting at the Department

of Foreign Affairs with Dick Spring, the Deputy Prime Minister, she said: "If the President would like me to stay, I would love to stay."

Leading article, page 21

Tax on utilities is legal, says QC

By PHILIP WEBSTER
POLITICAL EDITOR

THE Labour leadership last night published independent advice stating that its proposed "windfall tax" on privatised utilities is legal. The move was meant to remove any doubts about its plans to raise £5 billion to put 250,000 young people into work.

The cornerstone of Labour's economic policy appeared to be intact after Gordon Brown, the Shadow Chancellor, reversed his previous refusal to reveal the reasons for Labour's confidence that the tax is legal.

In an eight-page opinion, Michael Beloff, QC, one of the Bar's most respected figures and President of Trinity College, Oxford, concludes that the windfall tax could not attract a challenge under domestic law; that it should not attract a challenge under European law but that if it did the challenge would fail; and that it would withstand any challenge which might come under the European Convention on Human Rights.

In a further blow to utility leaders who have threatened court action, Mr Beloff concluded that there was no prospect of a possible lengthy application to European courts delaying the introduction of the tax. The tax would therefore go ahead in Labour's first Budget if the party came to power, and would be applied to all the privatised utilities, the leadership made plain last night. Other privatised industries, such as British Airways, will not be covered.

The Tories and some utility leaders had pinned their hopes on an opinion commissioned by the rightwing think tank, Aims of Industry, which had warned the tax could generate challenges. That advice, commissioned from Gerald Barling, QC, an expert in European law, said it was likely that "there will be legal challenges based on respectable grounds" although it did not say they would win.

Under Mr Brown's proposals, Labour will offer every young person a choice of four options instead of benefits.

Employers taking on long-term unemployed under 25 will be offered a £60 a week tax rebate for six months.

Voluntary organisations will be able to pay a weekly wage equivalent to their benefit plus a fixed sum for a year.

Young people without basic qualifications will have the option of studying fulltime on an approved course while keeping their benefit.

They could work on Labour's proposed environmental task force, paid a weekly wage equivalent to their benefit for six months.

Education best remedy for bigotry says Major

The Prime Minister met Britain's Jewish leaders last night and pledged his personal commitment to ending racial intolerance.

Mr Major, who has been wooing the ethnic vote in the run-up to the election, was at a dinner to raise funds for the Board of Deputies of British Jews. He praised the role of the Jewish community but declined to give any commitment on legislation on Holocaust denial amid calls that it be made a criminal offence.

Mr Major, referring to the Holocaust after Tony Blair indicated that a Labour government might be prepared to legislate, said: "Such bigotry is best confronted with calm reason and education."

Pro-Europe cash

The European Movement has secured a £150,000 grant from the European Commission to promote the benefits of EU membership. In a move likely to anger Tory Eurosceptics, the pressure group will launch a campaign to tell voters what they can gain from Europe.

Vetting tightened

MPs have been given details of stricter vetting of private sector applicants for Whitehall posts. They had sought assurances after the departure last year of Chris Green as chief executive of English Heritage amid an investigation into "alleged administrative irregularities".

CJD aid denied

Illa Andrews, whose mother died of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, the human equivalent of BSE, abandoned her claim for compensation from the Government yesterday after being refused legal aid. She claimed ministers had misled the public by saying that was safe to eat.

Relate boycott

Masood Chaudhry, chairman of the Institute of Islamic Studies in Nottingham, called for a boycott of relationship lessons for the city's teenagers being tried out by Relate. He said: "This is totally offensive. Children should be given advice in their homes."

E.coli fear

A woman aged 83 from Cairn Lodge, the Arbroath nursing home at the centre of a new *E.coli* outbreak, is desperately ill in hospital. Two other residents have died in the outbreak which has affected 22 Arbroath people, 19 connected with the nursing home.

Car kills sisters

Two elderly sisters died in Wolverhampton yesterday after a Porsche mounted the pavement and hit them. The car driver, a youth of 18 from Wednesfield, Wolverhampton, was arrested at the scene and was being interviewed by police. The car was not said to have been stolen.

£32,200 for VC

A Victoria Cross awarded to a Royal Navy petty officer during the First World War sold for £32,200. The medal was awarded to Ernest Petcher for his courage aboard a Q ship — an armed merchant vessel used to lure German U-boats to their destruction.

Row at St Paul's

Continued from page 1
able ability as a soprano singer which made her the strongest candidate of the 16 who applied. All other candidates were men.

Miss Winkett, who comes from a churchgoing family in Chalfont St Peter, Buckinghamshire and whose fiancé was killed in a climbing accident, is to take up her post from September. Ordained priest six months ago after training at Queen's theological college, Birmingham, she is considered to be one of the most promising of the hundreds of women ordained since Easter 1994. She appeared in the recent BBC documentary *The Calling* about life at a theological college.

Currently serving out her two-year curacy in the Chelmsford diocese, she came to the attention of Dean Moses in his former appointment as Provost of Chelmsford Cathedral. Miss Winkett, who read history at Selwyn College, Cambridge, and studied for a

year at the Royal College of Music, is curate at St Michael's, Little Ilford in Newham, east London, where her rector, the Rev John Whitwell, said: "She is an outstanding person and an outstanding priest and will go far."

Her appointment to St Paul's marks her as one of the church's rising stars. Should the church ever agree to women bishops, Miss Winkett is certain to be in the running. Her duties will include helping to order services, dealing with special, one-off services and events, leading the singing at evensong and serving as chaplain to the choir school. She will regularly take one of the 14 weekly communion services, plus other services.

This will not be the first time a woman has celebrated communion at St Paul's. The cathedral already has two women prebendaries, who are honorary canons, and women priests from the London diocese occasionally preside at a lunchtime communion.

Bounty

Continued from page 1
three Kurdish dissidents and if the verdict, expected soon, directly implicates the Iranian Government, the EU policy of "critical dialogue" could become untenable.

That policy was launched at the Edinburgh summit in 1992 when Iran appeared eager to put the Rushdie case behind it and woo the Europeans. Tehran promised not to send any hit squads to kill Mr Rushdie, and offered some countries specific guarantees that no attempt would be made to kill him or his publishers on their territory. Agreement broke down, however, because Tehran refused to lift the fatwa, insisting that a religious edict by Ayatollah Khomeini could not be repealed. Britain believes the "critical dialogue" has failed because Iran has not changed its policy in three vital areas: the Rushdie case, human rights and terrorism, and the attempt to acquire nuclear weapons.

Leading article, page 21

MI5 believes Rushdie will never be free from threat

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

SALMAN RUSHDIE will never be free of the threat of murder, even if the Iranian Government officially lifts the fatwa issued on February 14, 1989, according to security sources.

The level of threat faced by the author of *The Satanic Verses* is assessed by MI5. He is guarded by Scotland Yard's Special Branch in an operation that has so far cost more than £7 million.

Since the fatwa was declared, there has been a number of statements from leading figures in the Iranian Government which have appeared to indicate that Tehran no longer approves of the death sentence. These statements have not altered the view of those responsible for protecting the author that he will always be vulnerable to attack. Rushdie, who cannot stay at one ad-

dress for long periods, has admitted that the security has become "a nuisance".

The Foreign Office monitors every statement from Iranian leaders to gauge the status of the fatwa. In April 1993 Naeq Nouri, who at the time was Speaker of the Iranian Parliament and is now tipped to be elected President in June, said: "Iran neither had nor has any intention of sending commands to kill the apostate Salman Rushdie."

This was endorsed by President Rafsanjani later that year in an interview with *Time* magazine. In October 1993, however, Willem Nygaard, the Norwegian publisher of *The Satanic Verses*, was wounded by gunfire.

The following year the Iranian Ambassador to Oslo repeated the official policy that commands would not be sent

from Tehran to kill Rushdie, but he added that every Muslim was duty bound to kill the author "whenever and wherever he is able to do so".

The ambassador's remarks appeared in a letter to the Norwegian Foreign Ministry. He was subsequently recalled to Tehran, indicating that he had gone too far.

In April 1995, President Rafsanjani explicitly stated at a news conference in New Delhi that Iran had no intention of sending death squads to kill Rushdie. This was interpreted by some in the West as a sign that Tehran was moving towards lifting the fatwa. But the fears of the intelligence services were underlined when the head of the Iranian judiciary said last April that a Muslim would carry out the fatwa "sooner or later".

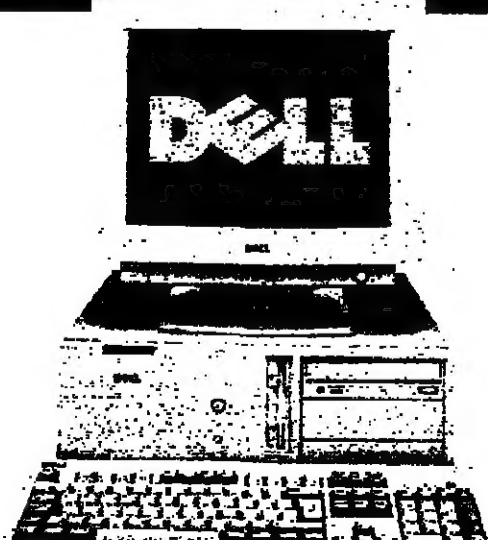
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BY RICHARD FORD

names were regularly mentioned by users and staff working in drug-abuse agencies and two separate sources

question customers about prescriptions for large amounts of

"Whatever the case, specifying the pharmacist gives the

The study estimated that overall up to 30 million retail deals in illegal drugs take place in London each year with 75 per cent of purchases arranged by telephone.



BY EMMA WILKINS
AND ALEX O'CONNELL

Her progress is assessed by a personal trainer, who is monitoring muscle tone, diet and general exercise.

By JAMES LANDALE AND ALAN HAMILTON

BY NICHOLAS WATT, CHIEF

Archer, delighted with the Queen's reply

ay British fore game

Viscount Ridley, the Lord Steward of the Household, announced the Queen's reply at the start of business in the Lords yesterday despite Lord Archer's absence from the chamber. Lord Ridley, elder brother of the late Tory cabinet minister Nicholas Ridley, told peers that he had a message from the Queen "written in her own hand."

It read: "I have received your Address and, relying on the wisdom of my Parliament, I desire that my prerogative and interest insofar as they relate to the succession to the Crown should not stand in the way of the consideration by Parliament during the present session of any measure providing for the removal of any distinction between the sexes in determining the succession to the Crown."

Lord Archer said that he was delighted. "I am sure it is a popular move," he said.

"Queen Elizabeth I, Queen Victoria and Queen Elizabeth II all rather prove my point."

fficer is

BY NICHOLAS WATT, CHIEF IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

The decision was taken by the Irish Rugby Football Union at the start of this

Many nationalists in Northern Ireland also object to it, because Orangemen beat out the anthem on their pipes and drums during the loyalist marching season.

By RICHARD FORD, HOME CORRESPONDENT

Mr Curran, 38, disappeared in May 1995, two days after being suspended from his job

"I don't believe this was just a road traffic accident," she said. "I find it incredible that of all days to have an accident, it had to be then. I think as I did before that something else was going on here. It is one accident too many." Six

Mr Curran's disappearance and the death in a car accident of Marcia Whitehurst, 37, a woman officer from the jail, were linked last month with allegations that prison officers helped in the escape. That was strongly denied by the Prison Officers' Association. The claims were made by defence counsel Michael Mansfield, QC, after the collapse of a second trial of the men at Woolwich Crown Court.

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Benefits staff too busy to notice they overpaid dole by £28m

By DOMINIC KENNEDY
SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

CIVIL servants were so busy introducing a new benefit for the unemployed that they mistakenly paid £28.5 million too much to recipients of the old benefit.

Sir John Bourn, the Auditor-General, today refuses to approve the books of the National Insurance Fund because so much money

has been lost through error and fraud. One in six employers may be avoiding payment of National Insurance on company cars and fuel at a cost of £100 million a year, auditors discovered.

The introduction of the new jobseeker's allowance, which replaced unemployment benefit, backfired on ministers who intended it to save money by reducing claimants' eligibility for benefit

from 12 months to six. The National Audit Office discovered that 7p of every £1 of unemployment benefit was wrongly paid in its last year.

Staff failed to weed out thousands of ineligible claims. Errors included a lack of accurate information about why people were unemployed, and mistakes in interpreting National Insurance records. "The main reason for the increase in these types of error in

1995-96 was the reduction in availability of experienced staff arising from the introduction of the jobseeker's allowance," Sir John says.

Inspectors from the Contributions Agency, which runs the National Insurance system, have been trying to increase revenue by targeting businesses which are already making payments, and checking their accounts for errors. Sir John suggests these are mainly

minor mistakes, based on miscalculations, and cost only £9.4 million a year. The inspectors would do better to concentrate on finding those employers who pay nothing, he argues.

Incapacity Benefit was introduced in 1995 in the belief that large numbers of fit people were claiming invalidity and sickness payments. Instead of simply proving that they are too ill to perform their

own jobs, claimants are now given a stringent medical examination, the "all-work test", to see if they are physically capable of holding down any type of employment.

The Benefits Agency predicted that 200,000 people would lose their entitlement, saving £415 million a year. Instead, only 102,000 of the 435,000 people examined had their claims disallowed, saving £280 million. Unemployment bene-

fit fraud costs a total of £167 million a year. Just over half is lost through individuals claiming money when they are not entitled, and the rest vanishes through the fraudulent encashments of girocheques and order books.

The drive against fraud resulted in the prosecution of 4,900 claimants and 132 colluding employers. People withdrew 88,500 claims after investigations.

Clarke balks at beans as he shops for voters

By RUSSELL JENKINS

THE Chancellor strained to lift a supermarket basket full of groceries for the milling television cameramen watched by bemused shoppers yesterday outside the Asda superstore in the heart of the Wirral South constituency.

The wire baskets, one held by Kenneth Clarke and the other gripped by the Tory candidate Les Byrom, were intended to illustrate how much better off the average family is now compared with 1992. To be exact, a reputed £21 after tax and inflation.

Mr Clarke, who breezed into Merseyside with an equally breezy message about the economy, could not quite stick to the script. He assured pressmen that he did go regularly to the supermarket to do the family shopping "with the missus" but then looked pointedly down at the basket. "As it happens, there is hardly anything in this basket

I would eat, except the pineapple," he said with a smile.

The Times asked him whether he knew how much the ordinary-sized can of Heinz baked beans in his basket cost on the supermarket shelves behind him. "Do I look like the kind of man who eats baked beans?" he replied, in a neat sidestep. "I am not a baked beans on toast man."

Minutes later, when Mr Clarke was trying to deliver a live interview to an ITN camera by the check-out desks, a scuffle broke out over his shoulder. Conservative Party minders and Asda security staff, in green jumpers and name tags, jumped in when Tony Samuelson, leader of the Against Conservatives Posing on Tobacco Companies Party, and his wife, Carol, dressed as a giant cigarette stub, tried to muscle in. Mr Samuelson's allegation, that the Conservative Party was in league with tobacco companies, was not a

welcome message on the day that Archie Norman, the chairman of Asda, invited the Chancellor on a walkabout in his store on Croft business park. "This is Nazi Germany," yelled Mr Samuelson, a by-election veteran, as he was bundled through the revolving doors.

Earlier Mr Clarke delivered in rapid succession a series of "sound bite" interviews designed to herald the falling unemployment figures, play down his argument with the Bank of England over interest rates, dismiss the fears of Unilever on the single currency and get across the message generally that the economy is in the best shape for a generation. Despite all this, some were finding it tough, he admitted. "The Governor [of the Bank of England] reckons we need a quarter of one per cent more and I do not because it is still quite hard work earning your living in this country in some places." That

part of his message struck a chord with many of the shoppers who looked with both bemusement and curiosity at the media circus surrounding the Chancellor.

Leonard Monks, 72, a retired driving instructor, from Bromborough, buttonholed the Chancellor about how the Government intended to help war pensioners. "I wasn't very satisfied with his answer," he said.

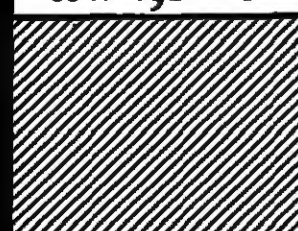
The Chancellor found a more sympathetic audience at The Village Hotel, in Bromborough, where he gatecrashed the presentation of an "Investors in People" award to the accountants firm McEwan Wallace. Ian St John, the television football pundit and former Liverpool forward, was among the suited businessmen. "My family has always been Conservative and we were one of the poorest families in Scotland," he said. "I'll probably be voting for Les [Byrom] this time."



Byrom, left, and Clarke at Asda yesterday. "Do I look like a man who eats baked beans?" the Chancellor asked

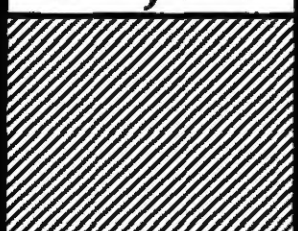
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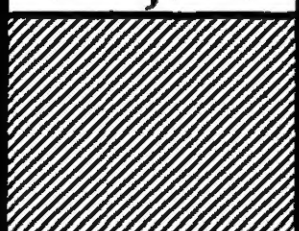
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INVESTMENTS

Oysters help farmers to clean seas

FARM pollution in the sea may be reduced by a new fertiliser additive based on a compound found in oyster shells. Backers say that it cuts the amount of fertilisers needed on crops, and so reduces the spillage into rivers and seas that can lead to toxic algal blooms.

The polymer, isolated in oyster shells in the 1980s, is said to draw more fertiliser and nutrients towards roots. It is being manufactured commercially from aspartic acid by the Donlar company of Bedford Park, Illinois.

CORRECTION

Margaret Baber, who was awarded £840,000 in the High Court in settlement of a claim for damages after her son suffered brain damage at birth (report, February 11) was booked for a hospital delivery, not a home birth, and spent most of her labour in hospital.

Wild salmon 'being killed by fish farms'

By NICK NUTTALL, ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT

FISH farms and North Sea trawlers are being blamed for the decline of wild salmon and sea trout in Britain's rivers. A government-appointed task force has concluded that action is needed to reduce the level of lice infestations on salmon farms to save the wild fish from further collapse.

Experts believe that the lice are contaminating and killing trout and, to a lesser extent, salmon as they migrate down rivers and past farming cages.

The Scottish Salmon Task Force also says urgent research is needed into the extent to which trawlers operating in the North Sea are accidentally catching young salmon migrating to Greenland. Research has found that, contrary to popular myth, salmon smolts migrate as shoals, often from the same river, rather than as single fish, making them more likely to be trapped in nets.

The task force, chaired by

Lord Nickson, was set up by Michael Forsyth, the Scottish Secretary, in 1995 to try to find ways of halting the decline of Scotland's wild sea trout and salmon stocks. Its conclusions, which have implications for all British salmon and trout rivers, will be announced tomorrow.

A draft report underlines the need for dramatic changes in the way fish farms are run to make them more environmentally-friendly. Several of the recommendations are likely to be opposed by the farmers, who will argue that the costs are too high at a time when the industry is under threat from a highly competitive Norwegian fish farm operation.

A key recommendation is that an independent committee should be set up to oversee salmon farming. The report states: "Levels of sea lice infestation on salmon at fish farms must be reduced."

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IN THE TIMES



MIA AND ME

"She and I don't see things the same way" Woody Allen answers back in the Magazine

BIG LEAGUE

Robert Crampton on the thrill of Sunday League soccer

PLUS

The Directory, Weekend, Car 97, and 1015 for young readers

Howells takes secret of wife's murder with him to prison

BY PAUL WILKINSON

THE secret of David Howells's involvement in the murder of his domineering wife Eve by their two school-boy sons was locked away with him in a life sentence yesterday.

Mr Justice Allott had adjourned sentence on Tuesday with a request for counsel to seek the "whole truth" from the family, but Howells and his sons Glenn, 17, and John, 16, stuck to their original stories. As the judge jailed Howells and ordered the boys to be detained during Her Majesty's pleasure yesterday, he made it clear he believed the father was the "instigator of this appalling crime".

During their month-long trial at Leeds Crown Court, Howells, 48, who was playing darts at the time of the murder in Huddersfield, west Yorkshire, had claimed he was unaware of his sons' plot to kill their mother. Glenn had admitted manslaughter on the grounds of provocation be-



Howells maintains he did not know of plot

cause of her constant emotional abuse. He said he snapped after one particular verbal attack from his mother in August 1995 and struck her repeatedly with a stonemason's hammer. John would admit only that he had disposed of the murder weapon.

Mr Justice Allott told Howells: "You suborned your sons into doing what they did. Over

a period of months, if not years, you so groomed and indoctrinated their young minds so that they did what you wanted.

"There cannot be a much more vile thing than to get your sons to kill their mother unless it is to contemplate cheerfully their long detention while you went free.

"Yours is by far the greatest culpability. Notwithstanding any deficiency in the deceased as a wife and mother, she did nothing to warrant the terrible way she died."

He said the court had been forced to focus on the "stark and admitted fact that an apparently decent boy of 15 struck his defenceless mother with at least a dozen blows with a hammer."

He added: "Another apparently decent boy of 14 was standing by to dispose of the hammer and his brother's bloodstained clothing. You, Glenn, were the actual killer and you, John, had a lesser but crucial role." Earlier Gary Burrell, for Glenn, said:



Eve Howells with her lover, Russell Hirst. Mr Justice Allott said that whatever her deficiencies as wife and mother, she did not warrant the terrible way she died.

"Glenn Howells still feels that he should carry the full responsibility for what happened... What is an inescapable conclusion in all this is that both parents carry a very heavy degree of blame for what happened. The reality is that none of us will ever know the whole story."

Simon Hawkesworth, QC, for the father, said he still

maintained that he did not know of the plot. "He accepts that he failed to act to prevent this tragedy when he had the power to do so and that in his role as a father he has failed his sons and bears a heavy responsibility."

Aidan Marron, for John, said it was through his father's attitude that the "unthinkable" plot to kill had become estab-

lished in his mind. Detective Superintendent Gary Haigh, who led the murder inquiry, said after the sentences: "While the boys could not pick their mother, David Howells had options, he could have removed the boys either by leaving or divorce. At the end of the day I believe he thought this was going to be the easy way out."

Snowdon lover took painkiller overdose

BY DAMIAN WHITWORTH

THE former lover of the Earl of Snowdon killed herself with a huge dose of paracetamol because of uncertainty in her personal life, an inquest was told yesterday.

Ann Hills, a freelance journalist, was close to Lord Snowdon for 20 years until her death. He did not attend the 30 minute inquest and was not mentioned. The only member of Mrs Hills's family to attend was her brother, Alan Philipp, a publisher.

Mrs Hills, 55, was found "curled up and dead" by her father, Elliott Philipp, on the roof of her London flat on New Year's Day. Westminster Coroner's Court was told.

Paul Knapman, the Coroner, asked her brother: "Whereas Ann had many friends, perhaps there was a failing to establish a permanent relationship with a male friend which caused her to worry about her future happiness?" Mr Philipp replied: "I believe there was a relationship which may or may not have been ending."

Mrs Hills spent Christmas in Norfolk with her former husband and her sons, returning home to Marylebone on December 30. A friend called police after noticing empty paracetamol wrappers next to wine bottles when she looked through a window.

Police found letters which suggested that Mrs Hills had taken her life. None of the correspondence was read at the inquest. Mrs Hills's body could not be found in the flat so police contacted her father. "He found her curled up and dead behind the chimney on a roof adjacent to the flat," Dr Knapman said.

Iain West, a pathologist, said that paracetamol, alcohol and temazepam, a tranquilliser, had been found in Mrs Hills's blood. "The level of temazepam was within the therapeutic range. The cause of death is paracetamol intoxication," Dr West said.

Recording a verdict of suicide, Dr Knapman said: "There was a moderate amount of alcohol, a moderate amount of temazepam and a lot of paracetamol. It is unusual to die straight away from paracetamol overdose, but it does happen from time to time and this was one of them."

"From the evidence I have seen this was an intended act. It is quite likely this occurred on the spur of the moment. She wasn't happy with her life at the time."



Ann Hills: body found on roof by her father

Faulty jet catapulted RAF pilot to his death

BY RUSSELL JENKINS

A TORNADO pilot who survived torture as a prisoner of the Iraqis during the Gulf War was suffering from a severe heart disease when he died in a freak air crash, an inquest was told yesterday.

Flight Lieutenant Simon Burgess, 28, was the youngest pilot to be shot down during the conflict six years ago. He endured 41 days in captivity after his aircraft came down over Baghdad a week after fighting began.

He was killed last February when his aircraft went out of control while taking off from RAF Valley on Anglesey. His Hawk trainer jet flipped over and the ejector seat catapulted him on to the runway. The accident was blamed on mechanical failure. A post-mortem examination revealed that he was suffering from a severe coronary disease.

Dr Anthony Caslin, the pathologist, said the pilot had died instantly from multiple injuries as a result of ejecting seven seconds after becoming airborne. He had not had a heart attack.

Stuart Culling, a senior air accident inspector from Farnborough, told the hearing in Llandudno, North Wales, that a rod leading to the ailerons had been disconnected. This would not have been apparent to the pilot.

Flight Lieutenant Burgess, from Humberside, near Grimsby, had passed all the regular physical examinations for flying. He was involved in training instructors at RAF Valley. Dewi Pritchard-Jones, the Coroner, recorded a verdict of accidental death.

Bishop's shunted car chases chariot of ire

BY RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

A BISHOP was involved in a high speed car chase to catch a lorry that had almost driven him off the road.

The Right Rev David Konstant, Roman Catholic Bishop of Leeds, was on his way to visit a hospital and school in Tamil Nadu, 150 miles from Madras, when his car was shunted by a lorry whose driver became enraged because he thought the bishop's chauffeur was not driving fast enough.

When the chauffeur tried to check the lorry driver's insurance details, he drove off. The bishop's car pursued the lorry down lanes and through paddy fields, finally forcing him to stop before they reached the hospital.

Bishop Konstant, who was

unhurt, said: "Imagine Bonadice in her chariot with the knives on the wheels: the bolts on the lorry's nearside front wheel were very proud of the vehicle. The driver was apparently oblivious of the chaos he was causing."

The car's passenger door was badly damaged by the lorry, which hit it repeatedly next to where Father Andrew Summersgill, the bishop's secretary, was sitting. He said: "The lorry was trying to push us off the road, not because of who we were but because we were going slower than he was."

"We chased the lorry driver along these terribly bumpy potholed roads. The bishop and I weren't frightened. It was actually quite exciting."

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مركزاً من راصل

Boat comes in for ferryman who found sculpture

By Gillian Bowditch, Scotland Correspondent

A FERRYMAN is expected to make tens of thousands of pounds from his discovery of a Roman sculpture of a lioness which was the best example of its type ever found in Scotland.

Robert Graham, 36, noticed the sculpture in the waters of the River Almond which runs through Cramond, on the outskirts of Edinburgh. The lioness's nose was inches from the steps of his ferry.

At low tide, he tried to dig the object out of the water. When he realised how heavy it was, he alerted archaeologists, who have dated it to the second to third century AD.

Mr Graham is now likely to receive the full market value of the sculpture from the Treasure Trove Panel which will decide its worth in a few months' time. None of the archaeologists involved in the restoration was willing to put a figure on the lioness but it is believed to be worth tens of

thousands. Mr Graham said that the sculpture had overturned his whole life: "I'm still in terror of the sculpture. I still cannot believe the interest, especially from America. Friends of mine were in Kenya and said I was on the main news."

"I would like some extra cash like anyone else but I am not interested in it. It is the fact I found it. I have always been interested in history. I prefer the past to the future."

Yesterday the cleaned lioness, which is devouring the head of a screaming, bearded man, was shown to the press. It will take a further six months to restore fully but has already revealed more clues about the tomb it guarded.

Fraser Hunter, archaeologist with the National Museums of Scotland, said the first surprise came when conservators cleaned the stone. "It went from a fairly horrible

muddy brown colour to off-white. It would have been a very arresting sight."

The sculpture is made of white sandstone but its provenance is unknown. There is a source near Alloa, in Stirlingshire, 35 miles away but it could just as easily have come from somewhere in England.

As they were cleaning the lioness, the archaeologists found two 1ft snakes on the base of the plinth. "Snakes were looked upon, more favourably in Roman times and often symbolised the spirit or the soul," Mr Hunter said. "Some of the mystic religions use them as symbols of rebirth because they shed their skins."

The discovery has convinced archaeologists that the sculpture was part of the tomb of a high-ranking official, possibly the commander of Cramond. It is likely to have been one of a pair or even one of four. Mr Hunter is optimistic that funds will be found for further excavations in the area.



Theo Skinner, a conservator, keeping the statue damp yesterday to prevent it from drying out too quickly

kind of thing you dream about as an archaeologist. I feel immensely privileged to be working on this amazing beast."

"It has probably been carved at the fort at Cramond by one of the auxiliaries stationed there. They came from Gaul, Holland and North Africa as well as being recruited locally. In British terms, the

quality of the artistry is very high. It has Celtic elements to it. It is not a purely classical piece carved by an Italian who was totally familiar with Roman art but the artist was very accomplished."

The sculpture will now be washed in baths of tap water and de-ionised water to remove the salt. It will take several months to dry and, after conservation work is finished at the National Museum's Granton Centre in Edinburgh, the Treasure Trove Panel will decide where to display it.

Mr Graham is unlikely to get his reward until all the conservation work is finished. The Crown will pay him at the expense of the museum which gets the sculpture.

Angus had to make do with a glass fibre replica until Dundee agreed to return it on a long-term loan. The real stone will not, however, return to its original location at Dun-

Peace in battle for Pict war memorial

A BATTLE for possession of a Pictish relic has been settled after 25 years. The 1,300-year-old Dunmichen Stone, which marks victory over the English at the Battle of Nechtansmere, was yesterday returned to Angus.

The sandstone relic, which is 5ft high, 2ft wide and weighs about a tonne, was given to the McManus Gallery in Dundee for safekeeping at local government reorganisation in 1971.

Since then Angus Council, controlled by the Scottish National Party, has urged the Labour-controlled Dundee City Council to return it.

Angus had to make do with a glass fibre replica until Dundee agreed to return it on a long-term loan. The real stone will not, however, return to its original location at Dunmichen Hill because of fears about its condition. It will be shown at the Meffan Institute in nearby Forfar.

Drivers on phone four times more likely to crash

By Jeremy Laurance, Health Correspondent

DRIVERS who use car phones while at the wheel are four times more likely to have an accident, research has shown. Hand-free phones are no safer than hand-held units. The risk is highest up to ten minutes after making or receiving a call, probably because the driver's attention is distracted.

The study of 699 car phone users who were involved in collisions is the first direct evidence that the phone adds to driving hazards and is likely to increase pressure for restrictions. Laws against using hand-held telephones while driving operate in Switzerland, Israel, two Australian states and Brazil.

Although there is no law in Britain specifically against using a car phone while driving, the Highway Code recommends that drivers pull over. Drivers who do not may be prosecuted for driving without due care and attention.

The researchers from Toronto University, Canada, selected drivers with car phones from among almost 6,000 involved in collisions in Toronto over 14 months from July 1994 to August 1995. Only those who had bills to show how much they had used their

phone on the day of the collision and during the previous week were included.

By comparing the use of the phone around the time of the accident with its use at other times, the researchers were able to estimate the increase in risk. The results showed that the risk of an accident was between 3.0 and 6.5 times higher within ten minutes after a call began as when the phone was not used.

The researchers, whose findings are published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, say the extra hazard is similar to that of driving after drinking with a blood alcohol level at the legal limit. Other studies have shown that telephone conversations can reduce reaction times by half a second or more. Steering was also made more imprecise.

A spokesman for Cellnet, one of Britain's big mobile phone network providers, said fewer than one million of the 6.9 million mobile phone users in Britain had units in their cars. "We advise people to invest in a hands-free car kit because they can then carry on a conversation over the phone as they would with a passenger. We don't draw a distinction between the two."

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Tip-off gave 4 names for murder of black student

BY MICHAEL HORSNELL

POLICE received an anonymous tip-off naming four white youths for the murder of the black teenager Stephen Lawrence within 48 hours of his stabbing. It emerged yesterday.

Detective Chief Inspector John Carnit, who took charge of the investigation two years after it happened, told the resumed inquest at Southwark Coroner's Court that officers were told by telephone that they would find a knife in a bin in a pub car park.

An officer searched the bin but found nothing. Mr Carnit said, "But upon his return he found a letter which had been attached to the rear windscreen of his car. It was an anonymous note."

The coroner, Sir Montague Levine, ordered that the four names, which were given to the jury, could not be published. Police held back for another day before visiting the suspects' addresses on the grounds that it was only anonymous information.

Nothing came of the information, though the four names were frequently put forward by other people in the area in the following days. The disclosure came as police were accused by Michael Mansfield, QC, counsel for the Lawrence family, of launching a murder inquiry "remiss in the extreme".

Detective Inspector Philip Jaynes admitted to Mr Mansfield that he had failed to make use of local police intelligence sources that might have quickly identified the killers. Intelligence collected at Plumstead police station, on individuals capable of unprovoked racist attacks, was locked away in an office and unavailable at night.

He said he did not know that there were families under investigation for racial attacks in the area where Stephen's unsolved murder was committed in 1993. Two specialist officers who dealt in racial harassment in the area — in which three murders had been

committed in the previous two years — were not on duty and were not contacted.

He could not recall asking any other officer to make inquiries in the road in Eltham, southeast London, along which the gang of youths allegedly fled.

He declined to accept that if it had been a police officer who had been killed, he would have sought immediate intelligence from Scotland Yard. Asked by Mr Mansfield if he had contacted Scotland Yard, Mr Jaynes said: "I had other things to do."

Mr Mansfield: "I suggest that was remiss in the extreme in not getting information that night." The officer replied: "That is your opinion, sir."

Mr Mansfield put it to him that what he should have done after obtaining local intelligence was to have visited families who were under investigation for racial attacks. The officer said: "That was a possibility."

He accepted that no house, nor group, nor individual had been put under surveillance.

Earlier a white man, known only as B for security reasons, told the inquest jury that he had a fleeting glimpse from the top of a double-decker bus of four white youths running away shortly after the murder. B, who initially lied to police because he feared recriminations, said that more than six months after the stabbing he contacted detectives to tell them the truth.

He said he thought he recognised Jamie Accourt and David Norris, who he knew, but accepted that the first of the two men might have been Mr Accourt's elder brother, Neil. Neil Accourt, 21, Luke Knight, 20, and Gary Dobson, 21, were acquitted of murder at the Old Bailey last April when it was ruled that identification evidence from Mr Brooks was unsafe. Charges against Jamie Accourt, 19, and David Norris, 20, were dropped at committal proceedings.

The inquest continues.



Search for meaning: a visitor examines the finished work on the Chisenhale Gallery floor. It will be washed away after the exhibition

The art gallery with ants in its paints

BY DALNA ALBERGE
ARTS CORRESPONDENT

AN ABSTRACT work of art created by ants during a walk sponsored by the taxpayer was unveiled yesterday on the floor of a London gallery. It was meant to symbolise social controls in society but the miniature artists could not comment.

They had spent six days being followed by a Japanese artist, crouched on all fours, who marked their squiggly routes on an area of 8 square metres. A video recorded the creative process.

Yukioji Yanagi flew from New York to create *Wandering Position*. Reactions from visitors to the Chisenhale Gallery in east London were mixed. Two girls had found it almost impossible to contain their laughter inside and felt a sense of release as they emerged giggling into the real world.

Victoria Roland, from Argentina, said: "It was difficult to keep a straight face. I don't know the meaning, I suppose it's hard work to follow an ant. The only thing to say

about it is the artist's patience. Maybe because he's Oriental he has a lot of peace."

Ron Pike, a London cab driver, was more forceful: "What a great waste of money. Completely pointless. Who writes the cheques for their grants? Some of these artists have a laugh at our expense. A bit crazy or what?"

However, a woman art lover, who asked not to be named, said: "A human mind

could never have made this happen without it being laboured."

Describing the creation as a work of beauty, she wondered whether any of the ants were aware of being pursued: "How aware is it of this thing behind it? I suppose he's got used to it, and thinks 'stupid bugger'."

Mr Yanagi worked with about half a dozen ants, using one at a time, tracking them

with a piece of crimson chalk. The common yellow meadow ants — like those found in any back garden — remain in three plastic containers and may be rewarded with a release into the community.

Mr Yanagi, 37, said he had expected the work to take much longer. He had worked for up to eight hours a day, sometimes late into the night. The ants were on more flexible shifts lasting just a few

hours. Any discomfort he suffered for art's sake was relieved, he said, by concentrating on the intricate job.

There were occasionally frustrations. "All the time, they were going down the cracks. I had to wait for them to get out. Sometimes, they stopped moving. Basically, they never stopped. They are almost like a machine, not like a human being." Sometimes they carried themselves a piece of cookie, "but if you gave too much, it's a small animal and would slow down".

Judith Nesbitt, director of the Chisenhale — whose annual public funding includes £63,500 from the London Arts Board and £9,744 from Tower Hamlets — said that her fears that ants were sleepy at this time of year were unfounded. She ensured that the gallery was specially heated to keep them happy while they were working. "We expect artists to be cold, but not ants."

The art work will be washed away after the exhibition ends on March 23, but the video will remain as documentation.



Portrait of the artist at work: an ant has its route tracked by Yukioji Yanagi

Jet exhaust 'harmful to ozone layer'

High-flying aircraft, such as Concorde and those on long-haul flights, may be causing far more damage to the Earth's ozone layer than had been thought. Scientists have found that exhaust fumes from aircraft at high altitudes produce sulphur trioxide. Under certain conditions it can act as magnet, accelerating the destruction of ozone by man-made pollutants such as aerosols, fire retardants and other chlorofluorocarbons.

Death arrest

A 59-year-old man has been arrested in connection with the death of four-year-old James Ward, who was found with severe head injuries behind a block of flats on the Castlemilk estate, Glasgow, on Tuesday. The man is due to appear in court today.

Murder charge

A French national appeared in court yesterday charged with attempting to murder Father Edward Carroll, 63, a Catholic priest, who is critically ill after being stabbed in the back at his church in Holloway, north London. Nicholas Top, 27, was remanded in custody.

School stalker

A stalker has grabbed at a young girl and followed at least five others in Hull over the past two weeks. The 12-year-old girl fought off the man, who disguises himself with sunglasses and a scarf, near a school on the Bransholme estate.

Order of merit

Jackie Mudd, 51, is the toast of the Middleton Arms in Leeds, where she has worked as a barmaid for four years, after receiving a best barmaid award from the brewers Tetley for being able to remember the names and usual drinks of 1,500 regulars.

The great escape

A ferret that escaped from a garden hut in Retford, Nottinghamshire, has been found a fortnight later and 20 miles away at Swallowest, near Rotherham, having crossed dozens of main roads, a canal and two motorways. It is now in a brick hut.

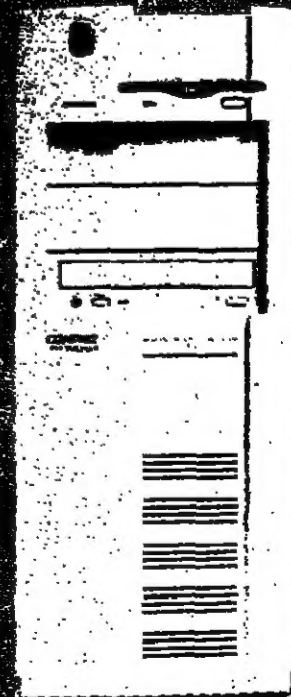
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Prices at £6,000 a bottle as millionaire composer clears out wine cellar 'good enough for Bacchus'

Lloyd Webber's £2m show stoppers



Lloyd Webber: passion

BY ALAN HAMILTON

THE latest show for Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber began to reveal its list of star names yesterday after decades in creation. This time the composer has not written a bar. He is auctioning his wine cellar.

Sir Andrew, ennobled in the New Year Honours, is the owner of no ordinary cellar. Sotheby's, which will conduct the £2 million sale, said that it comprised 18,000 bottles of the world's most desirable vintages. The 48-year-old king of the musical has been interested in wine since teenage years. He has not turned teetotal, nor is he in

need of realising his assets. He simply has too many wines — enough for five lifetimes, according to the auction house. He will keep back more than enough to toast his successes.

Serena Sutcliffe, head of Sotheby's International wine department, said: "I have never seen such a galactic collection. If Bacchus had a cellar, this would be it. In terms of quality, choice and quantity, it represents the wine lover's dream. Virtually every bottle falls into the category of the world's most desirable wine."

The collection, essentially French, is kept at Sydmon Court, his Berkshire home, and in the south of France.

Among items he has decided to part with are champagnes from Krug, Dom Perignon and Bollinger, ten cases of Chateau Latour 1982, 24 cases of Chateau Lafite, 10 bottles of 1945 Chateau Margaux, and six extremely rare bottles of Margaux dating from 1900. The pre-sale estimate for the last-mentioned is £6,000 per bottle.

Miss Sutcliffe said: "He is equally passionate about both Bordeaux and Burgundy. Wines which are luscious and opulent hold particular appeal to him, such as those from the fabled Domaine de la Romanée-Conti."

"His cellar comprises the best of Bordeaux with the full range of top

Classified Growths, from the First downwards." The sale also includes superb Rhône, top vintage port, Alsace and renowned Australian Grange examples.

Sir Andrew has done much unloading of his fortune recently. He has put his six-bedroomed London townhouse in Eaton Square on the market at £15 million, and earlier this week donated a Bentley car to a fundraising auction at the Conservative Party winter ball.

But at the same time, he has decided to postpone the Broadway launch of his new £6 million musical, *Whistle Down The Wind*.



Crates of greats: cellar had enough wine for five lives

How a young stranger developed a taste for seductive vintages of success

BY JANE MACQUITTY
WINE CORRESPONDENT

WHEN a hirsute Andrew Lloyd Webber first ventured into wine sales at Christie's, he was an unlikely looking buyer in his early twenties. Michael Broadbent, the head of wine department, ignored all his paper-waving attempts to bid because he doubted his company would receive the money. The newcomer introduced him-

self later and the two men developed a close friendship that lasted almost three decades. Many of the composer's purchases were made at Christie's. His selection of Sotheby's to sell his collection has triggered a brouhaha in the cut-throat auction business.

Christie's, where Mr Broadbent has retired, is the traditional outlet for fine wines and the company is "sore and surprised", Paul Bowker, the current head of its

wine department, said ruefully yesterday: "This is not something we fought for and lost. We were simply never offered it."

Sotheby's says that it will be the greatest single wine collection ever at auction, although in June 1994 Christie's handled the sale of the private cellar of the wine collector Remington Norman. That fetched £15 million then and would easily top £3 million today. Sir Andrew's collection is full of a rich man's

fancies with all the obvious classic chateaux and vintages included. There is little evidence of any exercise of personal judgment or connoisseurship. This is an investor's collection of labels, rather than a drinker's collection of favourite bottles. Wines were bought on Sir Andrew's behalf, principally by his adviser and friend, David Mason of the art dealers MacConal-Mason. A list of 21 wines disclosed by the

auction house yesterday suggests there are not going to be any bargains. The lowest estimate in the list is for Chateau Cimens 1949, a Barsac, at £100 a bottle. The highest is for Chateau Latour à Pomerol at £20,000 a case. The cellar also includes rarities such as magnums of Chateau Pétus 1947, Chateau Lafite, 1945, Chateau Margaux 1900 and Chateau Cheval Blanc, 1947.

Likely buyers will be traditional-

ists who have an insatiable thirst for classics. The great 1947 Chateau Cheval Blanc is a good example of Sir Andrew's palate, a top drawer St Emilion from Bordeaux's right bank and the star of this vintage. The 1982 Cheval Blanc is in the same league, a great wine from a great year, its perfume, seductive cabernet franc dominated fruit, well to the fore. The 1900 Chateau Margaux is first growth claret of its renowned

vintage but all any drinker is likely to be opening up is costly red wine vinegar.

Sir Andrew is clearly impressed by overtly luscious and opulent wines, which explains the presence of 1947 Latour à Pomerol, a great claret year but not in this case the wine of the vintage. That title goes to Pétus 1947, also included.

The sale is on May 20 and 21. Catalogues listing wines and tastings will be available in April.

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Hawking loses black hole bet 'on technicality'

BY NIGEL HAWKES
SCIENCE EDITOR

PROFESSOR Stephen Hawking has paid up on a bet he made six years ago with two fellow physicists. He bet Dr John Preskill and Dr Kip Thorne of California Institute of Technology that "naked singularities" — exotic objects believed to lurk in the centre of black holes — could not exist. On a visit to Caltech from Cambridge University last week, Professor Hawking conceded defeat. No money changed hands, he said, but he did present the two winners with a T-shirt reading "Nature Abhors A Naked Singularity".

"I wasn't careful enough about the wording," Professor Hawking admitted yesterday, "and I lost on a technicality. I paid with a T-shirt which they didn't dare wear because it wasn't politically correct."

A singularity is a point at which the normal rules of physics cease to function. At a singularity, space and time are infinitely distorted, matter is infinitely dense and the effects of gravity are governed by the laws of quantum physics. Singularities are believed to exist in the centre of black holes, where they cannot be seen because they hide behind the black hole's "event horizon" — the point beyond which nothing can be seen because gravity becomes so strong that it prevents anything, even light, from escaping. A naked singularity would be without its black hole covering and therefore visible.

Dr Preskill and Dr Thorne won the bet on the strength of supercomputer calculations



Hawking: paid up over "naked singularities"

by Dr Matthew Choptuik of the University of Texas in Austin. He concluded that there could be special circumstances in which a naked singularity might be created from a collapsing black hole. The chance of that happening would be comparable to standing a pencil upright on its sharpened tip — improbable, yet theoretically possible. Astronomers using the Hubble space telescope say new evidence of a huge black hole at the heart of a nearby galaxy, Messier 32, makes it more likely that the mysterious objects are a common feature of the universe.

Nasa scientists will present new evidence next month at a conference in Houston, Texas, that life evolved on Mars. They have found thin films of material on samples from a meteorite believed to have originated on Mars similar to "biofilms" made by bacteria on Earth.

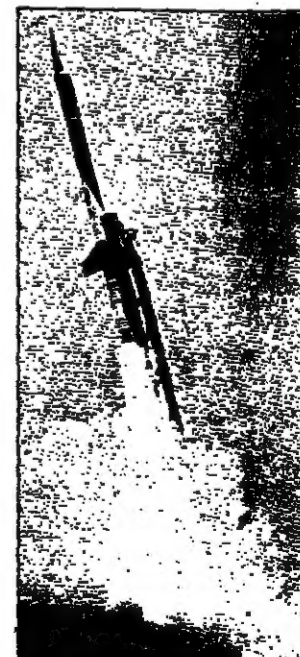
Skylark is still flying high after 40 years

BY NIGEL HAWKES

BRITAIN'S Skylark rocket is celebrating its fortieth birthday today. Although no match for Saturn V, which took astronauts to the Moon, Skylark has proved long-lived. It has completed 432 launches with a 99 per cent success rate, sending small payloads to the edge of space. Skylark's first flight was on February 13, 1957, at Woomera in the Australian desert. That was eight months before the Russians launched Sputnik as the first man-made object to orbit the Earth.

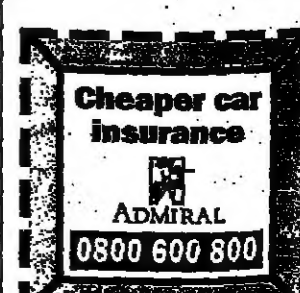
Forty years on, Skylark is designed and built at Filton, Bristol, by Matra Marconi Space, successor company to the space systems division of British Aerospace. It has an impressive record of launches in eight countries, including early trials at Aberporth, Dyfed. Each flight now carries an average of ten on-board experiments, mostly for the European Space Agency.

Scientists view the solid-fuel Skylark as an effective and affordable platform for a wide variety of space experiments. It is routinely used for projects involving micro-gravity and as a test-bed for future satellite missions. On-board experiments have included crystal growth,



Skylark launching at the Aberporth range

biochemical reactions, atmospheric testing and remote-sensing projects. Each launch programme can cost about £2 million and provide between six and twenty minutes of very low gravity for experiment.



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Lib Dems backtrack on bonus for elderly

By Polly Newton
POLITICAL REPORTER

THE Liberal Democrats denied having a commitment to increasing Christmas bonuses for pensioners yesterday after their social security spokeswoman announced that it was party policy.

Liz Lynne said: "The miserly £10 Christmas bonus is an insult which we want to redress by paying a double pension in the first week of December." She said the cost would be £580 million.

But party officials were quick to point out that bonus increase was a "long-term aim", not a commitment for the next Parliament, and would cost only £440 million. One said: "It is policy to do this, but when it comes to the manifesto policy will have to be prioritised very ruthlessly."

The confusion overshadowed the launch of the party's Fair Deal for Older People programme.

A Labour government would establish low-cost "stakeholder pension" schemes, run by financial services companies in partnership with organisations such as trade unions, Harriet Harman, Labour's social security spokeswoman, said.

Howard and Straw accused of rushing new bugging law

By James Landale and Polly Newton

MICHAEL HOWARD and Jack Straw were accused yesterday of rushing the Government's new police bugging laws through Parliament in an authoritarian manner.

Backbenchers on all sides of the House said that the Police Bill raised such grave constitutional matters that its detailed committee stage should be considered by all MPs on the floor of the Commons. They told the Home Secretary and his Labour counterpart that a small committee comprising a handful of MPs could not adequately scrutinise such an important Bill.

The Bill, which came up for its second reading in the Commons yesterday, will allow the police to bug private property in the fight against serious crime.

However, the measure suffered several defeats in the House of Lords when Labour and many crossbench peers voiced concerns at the civil liberties implications of police being able to bug without prior judicial approval. Under the original draft of the Bill, any decisions to mount an intrusive surveillance operation would have been reviewed retrospectively.

Mr Howard was forced to make several concessions, accepting that a senior judge,

known as a commissioner, must give prior approval before the police bug private homes, offices, hotel bedrooms and doctors, lawyers and journalists, except in urgent cases.

However, Nicholas Budge (C, Wolverhampton South West) said that many MPs still had deep concerns about how this prior approval would be given. "Would it not be better to have a debate on the floor of the House rather than have the suspicion that this is being bashed through in a rather authoritarian way?"

He was backed by Richard Shepherd (C, Aldridge Brownhills), who insisted that constitutional matters were traditionally discussed in a committee of all MPs. Both the Rev Ian Paisley, leader of the Democratic Unionists, and David Trimble, leader of the Ulster Unionists, also voiced their support for dealing with the Bill on the floor of the Commons.

But Mr Howard brushed aside the demands, saying that MPs would have ample chance to debate the Bill in detail during its report stage. He insisted that no constitutional issues were at stake because chief constables had authorised bugging operations for many years with "responsibility and restraint"

to tackle major drug traffickers, kidnappers, terrorists and major fraudsters. The Bill was simply putting this power on a statutory footing.

Mr Howard said: "This is an important Bill. It will make life very much harder for major criminals. That's what the public wants to see: that the whole House wants to see: that's what this Bill achieves."

Mr Straw said that serious crime was on the increase and the police should be given tougher powers to combat it. "I wish for the world of Dixon of Dock Green but, if that world ever existed, it has for sure now been and gone."

He said that the police should be given powers to bug private property in pursuit of serious crime, but added: "There is always the potential for such powers to be abused. Effective control checks must be in place to ensure that this does not happen."

As a result of Mr Howard's concessions, the Bill now has Labour's full support and is likely to become law before the general election.

However, the Liberal Democrats oppose it because they believe that prior authorisation should be given by a circuit judge, rather than a commissioner. Alan Beith, the



"NIFTY NICK" HOWARD CAUGHT IN MIDDLE OF AN INSIDE JOB

party's home affairs spokesman, said he could not support the agreement struck by Labour and the Tories to ensure that the Bill would receive a second reading. "The deal will not do," he said.

Mr Beith did not believe that Mr Howard could give assurances on behalf of every

police force that a code of practice would be observed. There should be a much stricter definition of the circumstances in which the police would be allowed to bug without prior authorisation.

Mr Budge said it was vital that the Bill undergo further scrutiny on the floor of the

House because Labour had not opposed it properly. "Labour have become more authoritarian than the Tories. If the Tories are in favour of kicking a beggar once, Labour is in favour of kicking a beggar twice. The official Opposition has not done its job at all on this Bill."

Howarth in line for Welsh seat

By Jill Sherman
CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE Labour MP for Newport East, Roy Hughes, announced yesterday that is standing down, prompting a flurry of speculation about whether the Tory defector Alan Howarth would replace him.

Mr Howarth is still looking for a seat to fight at the general election. Mr Hughes, 71, has been MP for Newport since 1996 and has a majority of 9,899.

Labour's national by-election panel will either impose a shortlist for Newport East, as there is no time for the full selection to take place, or will wait until the general election is called, after which the selection procedure can be bypassed and a candidate imposed.

The by-election panel meets on Monday to draw up a shortlist for Newport East, the seat vacated by the death of Martin Redmond last month. But it will also discuss whether to draw up a shortlist for Newport East and whether Mr Howarth, or Bryan Davies, who is higher education spokesman and the only frontbencher still without a seat, should be on it.

Mr Davies, whose Oldham Central and Royton seats disappear under boundary changes, is far more popular within the party but if Mr Howarth, MP for Stratford upon Avon, does not find a seat, it will be highly embarrassing for Tony Blair.

One possibility is that Derek Foster, former Chief Whip and now the Shadow Public Services Minister, might step down to allow Mr Blair to impose Mr Howarth as the candidate for the Bishop Auckland seat. Mr Foster has been promised a Cabinet post but Mr Blair could send him to the Lords and still honour the pledge.

IN PARLIAMENT

TODAY in the Commons: Treasury questions to the Prime Minister; European Aid (Chancellor's Report); Environment of Payment Protection Regulations; debate on House of Commons Disqualification Act; business debate on Western Hemisphere Council's dispute with South Korea; in the Lords: Geneva Convention (Amendment) Bill, committee; Overseas Domestic Workers (Provisional Bill); committee; Crime (Sentences) Bill; committee; debate on impact of wind farms on rural environment.

Tories' economic argument is falling on deaf ears

THE Tories are having the better of the pre-election argument over the economy, but it may not do them much good electorally. This is not just a matter of statistics — the rise in living standards, the further sharp fall in unemployment and the relatively low level of inflation (despite the differences over interest rate policy between Kenneth Clarke and the Bank of England which I discussed yesterday). The Tories are right about the conditions needed to create and sustain competitiveness, but this is an elusive concept for most voters, I haven't heard many people talking about "the enterprise centre of Europe" recently, even in Conservative Central Office.

Britain is well placed by comparison with the rest of Europe on labour market reform, deregulation and non-wage costs. William Waldegrave made a strong case in a speech to the Social Market Foundation (SMF) on Monday that the more flexible Anglo-Saxon approach to the labour market is better for creating jobs and reducing unemployment than the less flexible European social model.

Yet claims by ministers that the rest of Europe is moving slowly in our direction on labour market reform undermines some of the Tories' warnings about the dangers of the social chapter. If other countries no longer favour the extensive intervention and require-

RIDDELL ON POLITICS

ments on business advocated in the past, then the social chapter looks more of a paper tiger.

Both parties are trying to have the best of both worlds on the social chapter: the Tories by treating it as a dangerous iceberg, and Labour by presenting it as a non-threatening symbol of decency. But signing up to the social chapter would remove Britain's power of choice since decisions would be taken by qualified majority voting. Tony Blair is relying heavily on the good intentions of other countries.

Mr Blair has, of course, embraced

globalisation. He listens to business, as he showed in his response to the thoughtful recent book from the Institute of Public Policy Research. Mr Blair is the friend of the multinationals. Microsoft has replaced, or at least complemented, Methodism in Labour's pantheon. But is Labour willing to do what is necessary to secure competitiveness? This is much broader than just the social chapter and embraces deregulation and privatisation — which Mr Clarke on Tuesday described as "a litmus test of whether you seriously support free enterprise".

My hunch is that most voters probably accept the case for freer markets and for privatisation (after

the event anyway). What concerns them is the uncertainty and insecurity created by globalisation. Labour has been making much of this. Indeed as unemployment has fallen, insecurity has become the club to beat the Government. But as a new SMF research paper from David Smith has shown, insecurity is much exaggerated in practice. Average job tenure has not fallen dramatically; temporary work is much less in Britain than in much of Europe, and is rising only slowly; and the British Social Attitudes survey has found "no evidence of substantial job insecurity". In part, the reported phenomenon may be linked with the service industry redundancies of the early 1990s and

negative equity in the housing market.

Nevertheless, the Tories have so far failed to articulate the link between competitiveness and personal security. Talking about Asian tigers convinces few voters. The Tory message that economic efficiency creates social cohesion sounds abstract and arid. The Labour alternative that social cohesion is a precondition for economic success sounds more appealing. Labour has strong arguments on the need to do more to address long-term unemployment, to improve skills and the infrastructure. The Tories have a solid case, but is anyone listening?

PETER RIDDELL

Ministers face defeat on crime Bill

By Frances Gibb
AND RICHARD FORD

THE Government is braced for a defeat today when the Lord Chief Justice leads an all-party alliance of peers against Michael Howard's plans for tougher sentencing.

Lord Bingham of Cornhill,

the Lord Chief Justice, and his predecessor, Lord Taylor of Gostforth, are expected to join with peers in backing a move to restore judges' sentencing discretion under the Crime (Sentences) Bill.

At defeat will put the future of the Bill in doubt because of the shortage of time left before

the election. The Bill will have to return to the Commons, go back to the Lords then return to the Commons before becoming law.

The Bill proposes automatic life sentences for repeat serious sexual and violent offenders, a seven-year minimum sentence for persistent dealing

in hard drugs and three-year minimum sentences for persistent burglars.

Today peers will vote on two amendments that would enable judges to take into account the circumstances of the offence and the offender, and to vary a minimum sentence if they consider it to be "unjust".

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Triumphal art of France's history cosseted in concealed splendour at Palace of Versailles

French demand to see hidden riches of Citizen King

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

BEHIND the gilded and locked doors of Louis XIV's palace at Versailles lies a huge, splendid and embarrassing "secret" - 3,000 paintings and 2,000 statues, one of Europe's greatest art collections, have remained closed to the public for nearly two decades through lack of funds.

More than three million tourists visit Versailles every year to marvel at the celebrated Hall of Mirrors and the sumptuous royal rooms, but what they cannot see is the "Museum of the History of France", the array of artworks assembled in the 19th century by Louis-Philippe, France's "Citizen King", and arranged in 125 closed galleries.

The collection, which includes works by Delacroix, David and Vigée Lebrun, is closed because the State claims it cannot afford the 200 additional security guards needed. Now a campaign, led by Le Figaro, has been launched to force the Government to reopen the museum.

"The largest history museum in the world is to be found at Versailles," the newspaper declared. "Yet it is forbidden to the public."

The fabulous Hall of Battles, lined with paintings celebrating French feats of arms from 496 to 1809, has occasionally been open to the public, but the other galleries devoted to important episodes in French history are permanently closed. As critics have pointed out, the State spends millions every year heating the 125 rooms, polishing the gleaming parquet floors and maintaining the paintings, to be admired only by a skeleton

security staff and a handful of selected scholars.

"At a time when we are spending Fr700 million (£76 million) on the Pompidou Centre... could one not also rehabilitate the only museum wholly devoted to our history?" François Hauert wrote. The cost of reopening the museum would not exceed Fr50 million a year, he said.

King Louis-Philippe spent much of his personal fortune commissioning about 3,000 paintings to represent "all the glories of France" in a museum intended to reflect national reconciliation. The museum opened in June 1837, and at one stage attracted 12,000 visitors a day. "The success of Versailles continues to be prodigious," the king observed. "It is not only Parisians who go... but also peasants."

The king was deposed in 1848 and by the end of the last century the museum was firmly out of fashion. Its doors were opened to the public in 1978, but then immediately closed again when Breton nationalists detonated a bomb. The galleries, hailed by Victor Hugo as "this magnificent book which is the history of France within the magnificent binding that is Versailles",

have been under lock and key since.

The dispute over the museum's future has taken on political overtones. Built as the Sun King's fortress, a stunning visual expression of absolute monarchy where Louis XIV installed his court in 1662, Versailles has always been a focus of popular protest. It was to Versailles that the revolutionary mob marched to ex-

tract the doomed Louis XVI. The discovery that a museum intended for the people is off-limits to all but a few has struck a chord when many French voters are increasingly alienated from what is seen as an elitist and distant Government.

"Would this Greater Versailles not allow the French people to view their future with more serenity, by redis-

covering their communal past?" wondered M. Hauert.

Art experts agree that the collection is eclectic, ranging from acknowledged masterpieces to some low-grade commissioned works, but most agree it provides a unique historical testament that deserves a wider audience.

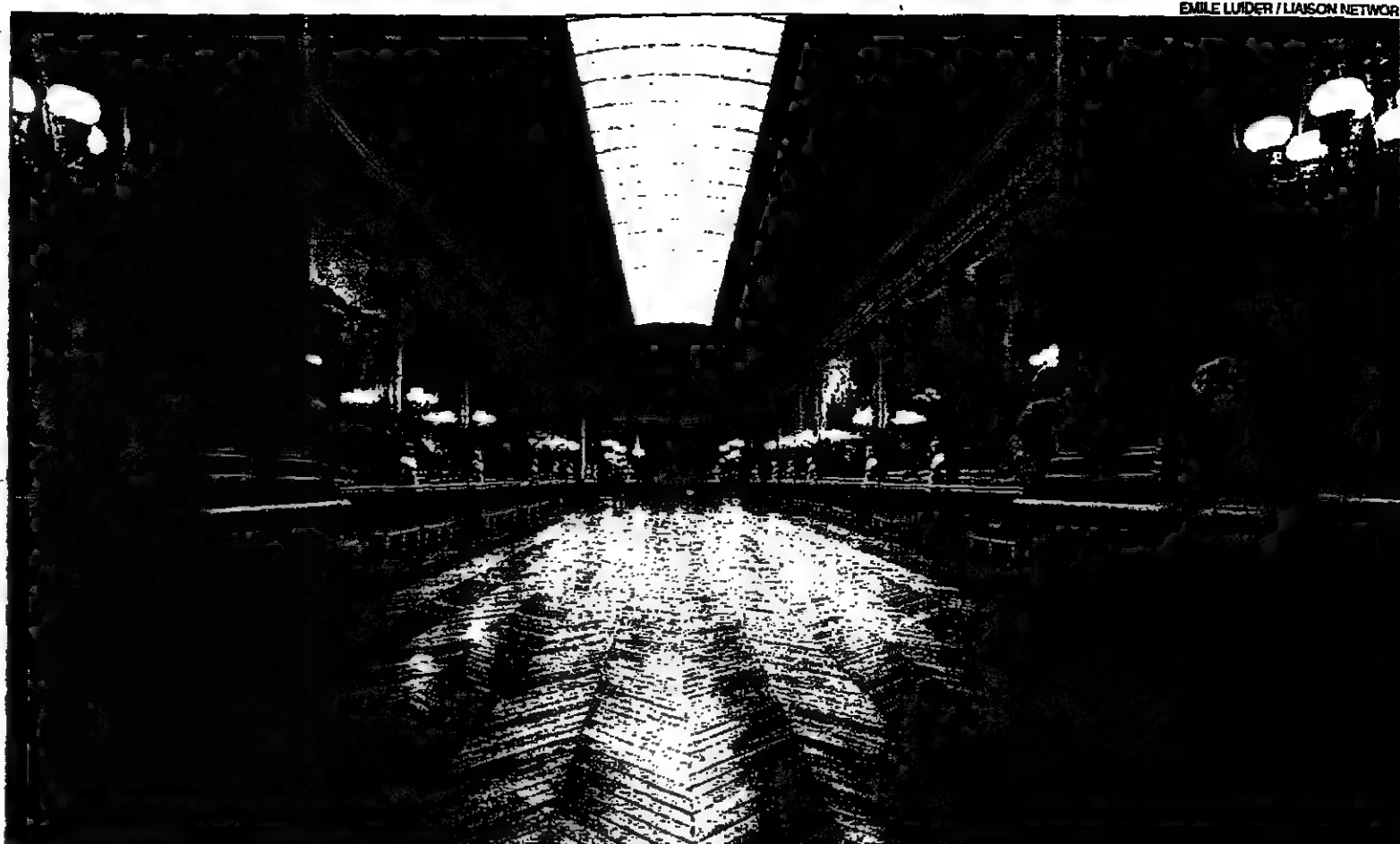
Under mounting pressure, the directors of Versailles are now considering a plan to reopen the Hall of Battles, as well as galleries devoted to the 17th and 18th centuries.

"Louis-Philippe wanted an ecumenical museum. This idea must not be forgotten," Hubert Austier, the president of the Versailles administration, said last week.

Tourism to Versailles has been dropping in recent years, and a massive administrative overhaul is under way to re-

establish the chateau as a key national attraction. The campaigners predict that the Culture Ministry will soon agree to pay for the extra guards, thus allowing the Government to claim credit for historical sensitivity. Versailles may be facing the sort of economic considerations that never troubled Louis XIV, but it has lost none of its political and symbolic power.

Louis-Philippe spent fortune on collection



Kept but rarely seen: the Hall of Battles, dedicated to celebrating French military success, opens occasionally while other galleries stay shut

have been under lock and key since.

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Pretoria links officer to prison gun siege

Johannesburg: An investigation was ordered last night to find out if firearms, used by prisoners in a siege at a South African jail in which five people were held hostage for 40 hours, were supplied by a warder (Ray Kennedy writes).

Officials of the Department of Correctional Services said that the involvement of a warder in the siege at the maximum security wing of St Albans prison in Port Elizabeth could not be ruled out. A task force which was sent from Pretoria stormed the block shortly after 3am yesterday and freed the hostages, two warders, two electricians and a woman prison hospital worker.

Strike closes Acropolis

Athens: Hundreds of tourists found the Acropolis barred by locked gates as guards joined other Culture Ministry employees striking for higher pay (John Carr writes). Greece's national archaeological museum stayed open, but most outdoor archaeological sites were shut, disrupting classical coach tours. All such tours feature a climb to the Acropolis, which has been closed by strikes several times in recent years. The employees' union said that museum guards were poorly paid and accused the Government of neglecting security.

El Loco to fight on in exile

Abdala Bucaram, the Ecuadorian President who was sacked by Congress on the ground of "mental incapacity" last week, left the country yesterday in a private jet, saying that he would launch a "campaign in exile" to regain power (Gabriella Gamini writes). "My country has been taken over by a dictatorship," said Señor Bucaram, self-styled El Loco (the madman). Meanwhile, Fabián Alarcón, the former congressional Speaker, was sworn in as interim President, pledging to restore Ecuador's dignity and respect.

Riot over work permits

Freetown: Sierra Leone police opened fire in the capital to quell a riot by hundreds of youths who stormed the main post office, accusing officials of dumping American visa applications in the sea. Red Cross workers said eight people received bullet wounds. Post office officials denied destroying the visa applications, which were part of an annual lottery organised by the United States to give a limited number of would-be migrants a work permit. (Reuters)

Tax fraud charges dropped

Medico City: An appeal court judge has ordered prosecutors to drop tax evasion charges against a brother of Carlos Salinas de Gortari, the former President, for lack of evidence. Raúl Salinas has been in a maximum security jail since February 1995, awaiting trial on charges of tax fraud and illicit enrichment. He is also accused of masterminding the 1994 murder of a former brother-in-law. (AP)

Swiss set up Holocaust fund

Berne: The Swiss Government agreed yesterday to create immediately a fund to help victims of the Holocaust. Flavio Cotti, the Foreign Minister, said. The Cabinet was still considering Jewish groups' demands for compensation for what they allege was Swiss profiteering from the Second World War. (Reuters)

Women 'not legal currency'

Port Moresby: The use of women as compensation payments by Papua New Guinea tribes must be dropped, a judge said. He ruled against a tribe which gave Miriam Willingal, 18, a second woman, money and pigs to a tribe as compensation for an incident in which a man was shot dead. (Reuters)

Child clothes link to Dutroux

FROM REUTERS IN BRUSSELS

INVESTIGATORS into Belgium's child rape and murder scandal have found items that they believe belonged to eight missing children in searches of houses linked to chief suspect Marc Dutroux, a gendarmerie spokeswoman confirmed yesterday.

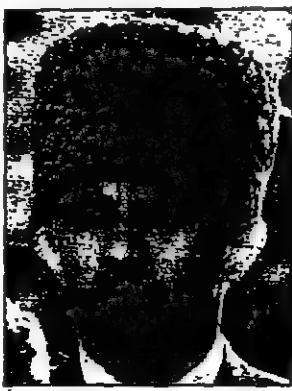
Media reports said investigators had recovered nearly 1,500 items of clothing, toys

and jewellery during their searches of houses connected to Dutroux, a convicted child rapist, around the central city of Charleroi. They had also collected 20,000 hairs.

Dutroux, who has admitted murdering Bernard Weinstein, a former accomplice, has also been charged with the murder of two girls as well as kidnapping, paedophile sex, rape and illegal imprisonment. A source close to the investigation said that the

items of clothing had been tentatively identified, using a new technique, as having been worn by the eight children on the days that they disappeared. The identification involves cross-matching types, colours, sizes and, where possible, labels with the descriptions given by the parents.

If the tests are positively confirmed, it will be the first time a direct link has been established between Dutroux and other missing children.



Maskhadov: took oath to defend new state

Chechnya President pledges 'freedom'

FROM ROBIN LODGE IN MOSCOW

ASLAN MASKHADOV, the newly elected President of Chechnya, formally took office at an inauguration ceremony in Grozny yesterday, and pledged to make the break-away republic's independence a reality after nearly two years of war with Moscow.

Russian television carried pictures of the ceremony showing the commander, 45, who had swapped his customary fatigues for a dark suit, taking the oath of office.

With his right hand placed on a copy of the Koran, Mr Maskhadov swore to defend the constitution, laws and freedom of the Chechen state. "Now it is the duty of each and every one of us to realise the expectations of our ancestors, our heroes fallen in the holy war, of the right to live freely and independently," he is reported to have told a hall packed with military and political figures, religious leaders and relatives of fighters who were killed.

The ceremony was attended by Ivan Rytkin, the Secretary of the Russian Security Council, representing President Yeltsin. General Aleksandr Lebed, who as Mr Rytkin's predecessor led the Russian side during last year's peace negotiations, was also there.

Russia has threatened to break diplomatic ties with any country recognising an independent Chechnya. So far none has. Representatives from Latvia, Lithuania and Ukraine were prevented from attending the ceremony.

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FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

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**Satire on race law in
*Le Canard Enchaîné***

The decisive Front victory in Vitrolles, which gave the far-right party control over a fourth southern town, has severely embarrassed the mainstream parties while adding fuel to the blazing debate over immigration poli-

"The only reference that people relate to is their country, their motherland," said William Abitbol, an aide to M Pasqua. "If no one else can provide those answers then the National Front is inevitably going to gain power."



FROM RICHARD OWEN IN TIRANA

The deaths of three people since rioting broke out in Vlore a week ago has given the anti-Berisha revolt its first "martyrs". "Long live the free republic of Vlore" declared banners that were raised by the crowd yesterday.

In Rome, Pier Luigi Vignati, a senior anti-Mafia prosecutor, said many of Albania's troubles stemmed from massive infiltration by Italian organised crime, which had manipulated many of the fraudulent pyramid schemes using Albanian "front men".

□ **Sofia:** President Stoyanov of Bulgaria last night swore in Stefan Sofiyansky, the anti-Socialist Mayor of Sofia, as the caretaker Prime Minister and set new elections for April 19. (AP)

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Pakistan Muslims force Christians to abandon homes

By CHRISTOPHER THOMAS, SOUTH ASIA CORRESPONDENT

THOUSANDS of Pakistani Christians are living in tents after an estimated 20,000 Muslim rioters drove them from their homes in Punjab. It is one of the greatest single acts of persecution of Christians since the creation of Pakistan, which became an Islamic republic in 1956.

Hundreds of Christians had their homes set on fire, churches were destroyed and 25 girls from a wrecked Christian hostel are missing. All religious minorities in Pakistan have suffered discrimination, and Christians are generally among the poorest citizens.

Alexander John Malik, the Bishop of Lahore, the Punjab capital, said the entire Christian village of Shantinagar, 65 miles from the city of Multan, had been looted and set on fire. Christians were living in tents under the supervision of the army. Until now, Muslims and Christians had lived peacefully together for many decades. He accused police of provoking the troublemaker of police in Shantinagar was suspended after Christians accused him and two colleagues of desecrating the Bible during a raid on a Christian home. The officers were arrested and released on bail. Bishop Malik said they had sought revenge by spreading

rumours that Christians had torn pages from the Koran, written blasphemous remarks on them and thrown them into a mosque.

Two men were reportedly killed during the riots, apparently by police bullets, and 19 others, including a policeman, were injured. There are fewer than three million Christians in Pakistan, which has a population of 130 million. Two years ago, a 14-year-old Chris-

tian boy was sentenced to death for blasphemy in Lahore, but was acquitted on appeal.

Christian Solidarity International, based in Surrey, said 13 churches were destroyed during the rioting. Muslims had reported finding a desecrated copy of the Koran. "News of this incident was immediately broadcast by two vans fitted with loudspeakers," it said. "This drew a

The news was broadcast that Muslims had found a desecrated copy of the Koran

frenzied crowd who went on a rampage." The army was called in by police to quell the riots. The affair had been well planned and co-ordinated by extremists.

The organisation added that 1,500 families were made homeless by the riots. It urged international pressure on Pakistan to abandon the use of separate electoral rolls, under which religious communities vote for their own members. This "religious apartheid" acted against the political and social interests of minorities.

Besir, Bhutto, the former Prime Minister, never honoured a pledge to review the blasphemy laws to make them less open to abuse by Islamic extremists. A 1987 amendment to the blasphemy laws made the death penalty mandatory for anyone convicted of blasphemy involving the name of the Prophet Muhammad.

The small Ahmadiyya community, a religious sect founded in 1889, faces severe persecution. It is accused of claiming that its founder was a prophet, contrary to the orthodox Islamic tenet that Muhammad was the last prophet. Pakistan declared the Ahmadiyyas non-Muslim in 1974 and a decade later an ordinance made them liable for prosecution for any activity deemed likely to "outrage the religious feelings of Muslims".



Pakistani Christian leaders complain to an army officer after they were attacked by rioting Muslims in the Punjab village of Shantinagar

Chinese arrest suspected leader of Islamic unrest

FROM JAMES FRINGLE IN BEIJING

A SUSPECTED leader of last week's demonstrations in the remote town of Yining, in China's northwestern Muslim region of Xinjiang, has been arrested, a local Communist Party official said yesterday. The man,

named Heilili, a 29-year-old Uighur, the region's principal ethnic minority, was said to have been the ringleader of a similar, less violent anti-Chinese demonstration last August. Then, he underwent "ideological education". Officials said that between 200 and 300 people had been detained since the riots, last Wednesday and Thurs-

day, when ten people were reported killed and 144 injured. They added that Heilili was under interrogation in Yining, 30 miles east of the border with Kazakhstan. The rioting was the most violent reported outbreak since Communist China regained control of the region in 1950. Since then Beijing has moved

millions of ethnic Han Chinese into the region, prompting sporadic outbreaks from the Turkic-speaking Uighurs, who have been spurred to action, analysts say, by the independence of the former Soviet Central Asian states, whose Muslim people are of the same ethnic make-up as those in Xinjiang.

Husband of Cornwell's lover jailed for 61 years

FROM QUENTIN LETTS IN NEW YORK

A FORMER FBI agent whose estranged wife had a lesbian affair with Patricia Cornwell, the novelist, faces a long stint in prison after being found guilty of attempted murder.

Eugene Bennett, 42, claimed he was insane when he plotted to kill his wife, Marguerite, but a jury in Virginia recommended that he spend 61 years in jail. Bennett, a father of two, used his surveillance skills to snoop on his wife while she conducted an affair with Miss Cornwell, who has made millions from detective novels. Miss Cornwell did not give evidence and did not attend the trial.

The court heard that Bennett started to plot his wife's death after their marriage broke down during her affair with Miss Cornwell. Bennett watched the two women embrace in a car and later kidnapped at gunpoint his wife's church minister, the Rev. Edwin Clever, and lured Mrs Bennett to the scene.

Mrs Bennett, 42, herself a former FBI agent, suspected that her husband was up to something and went to the church with a gun. Bennett had tied the minister to a chair and had placed a bag around his waist that appeared to be primed with explosives.



Anderson is escorted by police into court yesterday

Six murder charges for New Zealander

FROM AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE IN HAMILTON

THE man accused of carrying out the latest mass killing in the rock, New Zealand appeared in court yesterday as 400 people gathered for a memorial service for the six victims near the scene of the killings.

Five new murder charges were laid against Stephen Anderson, 24, in his second court appearance since the killings on Saturday at the ski resort of Raurimu.

Among the new charges was the murder of his father. Mr Anderson, who faced a first murder count when he was brought before a special court on Sunday, also faces eight charges of attempted murder and one of illegal possession of a shotgun. Mr Anderson was not asked

to enter a plea during the eight-minute hearing in the Hamilton District Court and was remanded in custody until February 26. His lawyer, Stuart Grieve, asked Judge Geoffrey Rea to remand Mr Anderson to a psychiatric institution.

Mr Anderson, who was found naked in the bush after the shootings, looked gaunt and downcast as he stood in the dock wearing white police-issue overalls, flanked by police officers.

Mr Anderson's father, Neville Robin Anderson, was among the dead. His mother was wounded in the attack which came during a family reunion at a ski lodge in the village.

'Little harm' in ten-death treachery

By QUENTIN LETTS

THE American traitor Aldrich Ames, granted the surprising privilege of a television interview on an American news show, said that his betrayal of his country to the KGB caused "no significant damage".

The Soviet spy's casual denial that he had hurt America's national security interest, which was broadcast on ABC's *Nightline* programme, coincided with fresh claims about his treachery. A new book, *Confessions of a Spy*, based on prison interviews Ames gave to Pete Earley, a writer, stated that Ames betrayed more than twice as many CIA agents as has been disclosed previously.

At least ten agents met their deaths as a result, including deep sources in the Soviet defence industry and the KGB. Ames, who was arrested in Virginia in 1994, is serving a life prison sentence for selling American secrets to the former Soviet Union. He has been blamed previously for betraying 12 CIA agents who were operating in hostile territory, but according to Mr Earley the number was 25.

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Top North Korean official defects to Seoul embassy

FROM JAMES PRINGLE IN BEIJING AND ROBERT WHYMANT IN TOKYO

IN A potentially devastating blow to the waning fortunes of the isolated and paranoid Stalinist North Korean regime, a close confidant of the dictator, President Kim Jong Il, yesterday defected to the South Korean Government.

Hwang Jang Yop, 72, a secretary of the communist state's ruling Workers' Party and a member of the party central committee, was last night under heavy guard in a South Korean diplomatic compound in Beijing. He walked into the grounds of the South Korean Embassy at about 10am with Kim Duk Hung, his 55-year-old aide. They started diplomats by requesting political asylum.

The two North Koreans had been on their way home to Pyongyang via Beijing, after attending a North Korean-sponsored seminar in Japan. South Korean envoys said Mr Hwang is the highest-ranking person to defect from the North, now beset by serious food and fuel shortages.

The North Korean Foreign Ministry said, however, that the aide must have been kidnapped. A spokesman said the idea that he had sought asylum was "inconceivable and impossible".

Acknowledging how embar-

rassing the matter was for the Chinese Government, which is North Korea's last remaining significant ally, Chung Jong Wook, the South Korean Ambassador, told reporters it was "a very sensitive issue". Embassy officials said negotiations were under way with the Chinese Government about "diplomatic methods" of getting Mr Hwang to Seoul.

Worried South Korean diplomatic sources said their embassy had warned diplomats and South Korean civilians in Beijing to exercise extra caution in case North Korean agents tried to take hostages for the return of Mr Hwang.

In the past few days many North Korean diplomats have left Beijing for Pyongyang to take part in 55th birthday celebrations on Sunday for the North Korean leader.

Diplomats and analysts in Beijing said Mr Hwang's defection could indicate a power struggle in the North, where there have been reports of differences between competing sectors in the regime. They said Mr Hwang was known to be a key theoretician behind *juche*, North Korea's ideology of self-reliance, in his earlier role as President of Kim Il Sung University.

The defection will be greeted

with dismay by Kim Jong Il, who has ruled in a power vacuum since the death of Kim Il Sung, his father, in July 1994. The younger Kim has yet to succeed to his father's old titles of general secretary of the Workers' Party and state President. However, speculation that he would be promoted this year appeared to be supported by a flood of adulation preceding his birthday.

Mr Hwang is believed to have been a cousin of Kim Il Sung, who was regarded with almost god-like fervour.

There was some speculation in Beijing last night that a factor in the defection may have been Mr Hwang's possible failure to obtain more food aid in Japan, given the spectre of famine stalking North Korea after devastating floods destroyed harvests.

□ Seoul: A South Korean loans scandal yesterday threatened to engulf President Kim Young Sam in an election year as Kim Woo Suk, the Home Minister, resigned, and another of the President's trusted associates was questioned by prosecutors. Lee Soo Sung, the Prime Minister, indicated he was also willing to quit amid media speculation that the whole Cabinet would have to go. (Reuters)



Ahira Weisabi, right, one of 30 Palestinian women released from Israeli jails this week, is greeted by her mother in Ramallah yesterday. Binyamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, will meet President Clinton in Washington today and, according to Israeli radio, present him with new proposals for reviving the peace negotiations with Syria, which have been stalled for the past 11 months (Christopher Walker writes). Today's White House talks are the start of a new widening initiative by the Clinton Administration to harness the momentum resulting from last month's Israeli withdrawal from most of Hebron. Senior US officials said that Mr Netanyahu's visit would be followed by separate visits by Yasser

Women celebrate liberty

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Arafat, the Palestinian leader. President Mubarak of Egypt and King Hussein of Jordan.

Mr Clinton is said to be "acutely aware" that no comprehensive peace can be obtained in the region without a pact between Israel and Syria over the disputed Golan Heights.

Kremlin steps up attack on Nato

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN MOSCOW

THE Kremlin yesterday launched an angry verbal attack against Nato, accusing the alliance of secretly undermining Russia's relations with the former Soviet republics.

In some of the toughest language yet used by Moscow in the acrimonious debate with Nato over its planned eastward expansion, the Kremlin accused the alliance of having an "undeclared and secret agenda".

"The West as a whole, and the leadership of Nato in particular, is opposed to any form of political and military integration among newly independent states, the former Soviet republics, especially when the initiative comes from Moscow," Sergei Yastrzhembsky, the presidential spokesman, said.

It is unthinkable that his remarks would not have been authorised at the highest levels of the Russian leadership, most probably personally by President Yeltsin, who is still recovering from flu.

Although unnamed, the target of the attack was clearly Javier Solana, the Nato Secretary-General, who is on a tour of Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, all former Soviet republics where Russia keeps large military forces.

Solana first angered the Russians during his visit to Moldova on Monday when he said that the Kremlin should comply with its commitment to pull its 6,000 troops out of the breakaway region of Transnistria.

Nato sources denied Russia's allegations that the alliance was trying to prevent the integration of former Soviet republics. "Nato does not regard the relationship between these countries and the alliance, and the relationship between these countries and Russia as mutually exclusive," one source said.

The official said that Senior Solana was visiting the four former Soviet republics at their invitation. They were all members of Nato's Partnership for Peace programme and it was important to keep them informed of the latest Nato thinking, the official said.

Bonino chosen as new BSE chief

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN BRUSSELS



Bonino: taking charge of consumer health

IN A move to quell continental anger over his handling of the "mad cow" epidemic, the European Commission yesterday invested Emma Bonino, one of Brussels' star members, with new authority as chief of consumer health and downgraded the powerful agriculture directorate.

Stung by criticism from MEPs, Jacques Santer, President of the Commission, hopes the internal revamp will appease the Strasbourg assembly when it decides next week whether to censure the Brussels executive over its management of the BSE crisis. The Parliament is to endorse the

findings of an inquiry which accused the Commission of consistent negligence, conniving with Britain and a policy which gave priority to the beef industry over public health.

A vocal band of MEPs is pushing the Parliament to pass a censure vote — though this is highly unlikely to succeed.

The main loser in the reshuffle is Franz Fischler, the Austrian Farm Commissioner, who heads Directorate-General VI, an empire within the Commission which runs agriculture, including making, implementing and monitoring policy on animal health

and food safety. As part of the reform, the Commission is revamping the byzantine system of scientific committees responsible for formulating policy, making them more accountable.

The seven committees concerned with food safety will now report to the much-enlarged directorate under the Italian Signora Bonino.

Under the revamp, a group of commissioners headed by Mr Santer and including Signora Bonino will co-ordinate policy on food and human health, now one of the most sensitive areas of decision-making.

Farewell to Harriman

Washington: In death, as in life, Pamela Harriman is attracting a rare congregation of the great and good to her funeral at Washington's national cathedral today (Tom Rhodes writes).

President Clinton will deliver the eulogy. Al Gore, the Vice-President, and Winston Churchill, her son, will give readings. A host of the city's diplomats, the Clinton Cabinet, White House officials and other notables are expected to attend.

Much speculation has centred on the millions left to her by Averell Harriman. A decision on the will is said to be expected "soon".

Anxious Kohl quick to deny cancer rumour

FROM PETER BILD IN BONN

HELMUT KOHL, the German Chancellor, has emphatically denied rumours that he has cancer. Departing from his usual policy of ignoring personal comments, he has rejected claims in *Der Spiegel* magazine, which alluded to suspicions among his Christian Democrat party members that he might have the disease.

He described the rumours as pure invention. "I've experienced a lot of malice in my life but this is really tacky. It's clear what these people want. They're trying to spread uncertainty — among Christian

Democrat members and supporters, in the German population at large and also among our foreign friends and partners."

Herr Kohl's strong response betrays political anxiety but also reflects a long-running grudge against the news magazine. More than 20 years ago, when he arrived in Bonn as party leader, *Der Spiegel* contrasted his provincialism and inability to speak another language with the internationalism of Helmut Schmidt and Willy Brandt, his Social Democrat predecessors.

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THE SUNDAY TIMES

DEATH RACE

THE GHOST OF AYRTON SENNA

The cause of Ayrton Senna's fatal crash is still a mystery. This weekend, The Sunday Times Magazine reveals intriguing new evidence

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Roadblocks trap Britons in Spanish lorry strike

BY TUNKU VARADARAJAN IN MADRID AND MARK HENDERSON

SCORES of British lorry drivers were trapped in Spain last night as an increasingly violent strike by Spanish truckers closed most of the country's northern motorways.

The strike, called indefinitely by the drivers' union, Fedetrans, started a week ago today. Inspired in large measure by France's violent stoppages last year, it has closed Spain's road borders with France and Portugal as well as several inland motorways through Castile, Cantabria and the Basque country.

British drivers at Irón, near the French border, reported as many as 1,500 lorries held up by roadblocks, and attacks on drivers and their vehicles. "The side of my truck was slashed with a Stanley knife, and lots of lads have had their

tyres slashed," said John Walsley, from Chatteris, near Newmarket.

Another British driver, Mick Shortland from Huddersfield, said the blockade was becoming more violent than the French strike. "They've set trucks on fire in Zaragoza and Bilbao," he said. "They're dropping stones onto trucks from the bridges, and we heard two British drivers have been beaten up."

In Cabezón de Pisuerga, near Valladolid, a Briton was accused of threatening pickets with a pistol to force his way through a makeshift roadblock. In another incident at the same village, a Dutch lorry driver rammed the roadblock, injuring a picket. Elsewhere, foreign lorries have been attacked by pickets with crow-

bars and hammers, tyres have been slashed and bricks thrown through windcreens.

Some 500 lorry drivers were reported to be marooned on the Portuguese border with Extremadura, having spurned a Spanish offer of a police escort on the motorway. Interviewed on Portuguese radio, one said: "Things could get ugly, as they did in France. I am not taking any chances." An estimated 300 lorries —

some two dozen of them British — are also stranded near Hendaye, on the French side of the border.

The strike has paralysed nearly 80 per cent of Spain's road transport sector. Losses for the first week have been estimated at £75 million, and are likely to rise sharply in the coming days.

Haulage firms in Britain said they faced huge losses. Three of the four lorries oper-

ated by Thermotrans in Southampton have been trapped by the strike, and Roger Grimes, UK transport manager of Breda International, said his company could lose £50,000 worth of business because of the firm's six blocked lorries. "It is always us poor Brits who get it in the neck," he said. "First it was France, then Greece and now Spain."

Yesterday, as the strike bit hard, Michelin, Nissan and

Renault all announced "technical stoppages" at their Spanish factories as supplies of parts dried up. Suppliers of fresh fish in Galicia also announced that the strike was causing stocks to rot at ports and warehouses, and across northern Spain several petrol stations have closed as tanks emptied.

The basic demands of the Spanish strikers bear a close resemblance to those made

last year by their French counterparts. Fedetrans wants the age of obligatory retirement to be reduced to 60, and that of voluntary retirement with full benefits to be lowered to 55. Furthermore, the union insists that fuel should be available to the sector at a subsidised rate, as well as enhanced medical benefits "tailored to the special circumstances of the profession". The Spanish Ministry of

Development, which has responsibilities for road transport, yesterday condemned the strike as "foolish and provocative".

A spokesman said: "We can only agree to civilised negotiation, for which channels already exist. This strike is blackmail by a tiny minority which is forcing the majority of honest and reasonable truckers to suspend their usual service."



Spanish national police guard a convoy of lorries transporting fish from Vigo and Marín in Galicia to Madrid, Seville, Valencia and other main cities yesterday

Embattled Mobutu loses town

FROM SAM KILBY IN KINSHASA AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

THE forces of Laurent Kabila, the rebel leader, set off yesterday in the direction of silted President Mobutu's jungle palace at Gbadolite after capturing the key town of Isiro in northeast Zaire.

In Paris, a French Foreign Ministry spokesman said the rebels, who hold towns and territory in east Zaire, would be excluded from an international conference which France wants organised to tackle the Zaire crisis.

"Our forces are now in complete control of Isiro," Mr Kabila said. "The town was taken late on Tuesday." Rebel officials said units were conducting mop-up operations in the town and had seized its airstrip. "Our struggle will continue until Mobutu is killed," sang the rebels. Mr Kabila said government



troops and foreign mercenaries had retreated from Isiro to Buta, the next stop on the road towards the President's residence. Isiro is about 500 miles east of Gbadolite.

"Our advance has caused a lot of panic in the Government. The panic is such that Mobutu now sleeps in Bangui (the capital of the Central African Republic) and only comes to Gbadolite in the morning," Mr Kabila added. Mr Mobutu is due to pay a

fleeing visit to Kinshasa, the Zairean capital, today. His henchmen will organise the usual rent-a-crowd reception for him. However, they have done so with dwindling enthusiasm for a dying President who heads a Government with an unpopular lame duck Prime Minister, Kengo wa Dondo, and a system so corrupt that teenage soldiers are sent to die in battle against the rebels without pay, food or ammunition. "There are signs that members of his own entourage are losing faith in Mobutu," one Western ambassador noted.

On Monday Kinshasa was shut down in a "dead city" protest organised by anti-Mobutu leaders. Another protest, this time by students, is scheduled for tomorrow. In the capital there is growing support for Mr Kabila, who recently vowed to "kill Mobutu". Kinshasa, and Zaire's vast mineral wealth, is

in the hands of a number of inter-related families that control the Government and the Opposition and do good business with arms and diamond smugglers in Kinshasa.

A Defence Ministry spokesman tried to put a brave face on the loss of Isiro. He insisted that Zaire's infantry would retake the town. He admitted, however, that the soldiers were far beyond the range of mercenary-piloted helicopter gunships, which could turn the battle in the Government's favour.

An aid worker who recently returned from the town said: "The defeated soldiers will be on the run by now. If they have any transport they could be in Kisangani within a week. Humiliated, exhausted and angry they will enter a town with large amounts of food aid stockpiled, cars, wealth, and take revenge against their own people for abandoning them."

Genocide tribunal 'shambles'

New York: A United Nations watchdog agency yesterday described the Rwanda war crimes tribunal as a management shambles and called for the ousting of the Madagascan prosecutor in charge of bringing genocide suspects to justice (James Bone writes).

The UN's internal investigation — conducted by its office for internal oversight services — stems from complaints about nepotism and mismanagement at the tribunal's offices in Arusha, Tanzania, and its prosecution section in the Rwandan capital, Kigali.

The tribunal, set up two years ago, has indicted 21 people for their role in the 1994 genocide by Hutu extremists, which claimed more than half a million lives in Rwanda. It recently began its first trial.

America aghast at Oscar invasion by foreign stars

FROM QUENTIN LETTS IN NEW YORK

HOLLYWOOD'S trouncing in the Oscar nominations by foreign actors and independently produced films — a number of them British or with British connections — has gone down like a sinkbomb with America's flintier arts commentators.

"Who are these people, anyway?" demanded yesterday's *New York Post*. The paper's Cindy Adams wrote: "What is it with those twinkies out there who make the nominations?"

Mrs Adams proceeded, by her own admission, to "bitch" about the long list of non-American nominees, from Britain's Brenda Blethyn in *Secrets and Lies* and Kristin Scott Thomas in *The English Patient* to the Australian Geoffrey Rush who played the

'Who are these people anyway?'

lead role in the largely Australian-made *Shine*. Of Marianne Jean-Baptiste, who was nominated for a best supporting actress Oscar for her part in Mike Leigh's British hit *Secrets and Lies*, Mrs Adams asked: "Marianne Jean What?"

American film critics beat their brows in astonishment that Madonna had been "snubbed" by the Academy, there being no reward for her role in *Evita*. Headline writers called the

nominations shock "Independents Day" in tribute to the preponderance of non-Hollywood films over the usual blockbusters. The only Hollywood film to do really well was *Jerry Maguire*, whose star, Tom Cruise, can probably count on unqualified support from the home crowd on Oscar night next month.

Such was the sense of shock at Hollywood's eclipse that *The New York Times* looked down its lorgnette and saw fit to publish a leader on the subject. "The Oscar nominations may be a tribute to an exciting new wave of talent," it pronounced, with hidden emphasis on the "may".

"Or they could be an embarrassing admission that the major American studios did not produce anything more interesting than *Jerry Maguire*."

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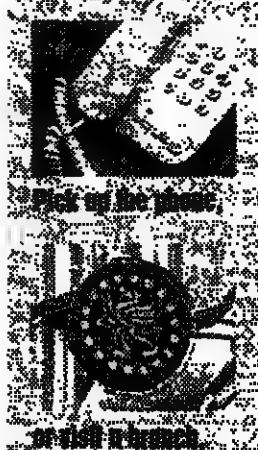
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TIMES 13/2



Dr Thomas Stuttaford on St Valentine and the stigma of epilepsy, the age-old search for aphrodisiacs, the latest treatment for stroke victims and the link between hormones and asthma attacks

The last of the hidden diseases

In 1926, Graham Greene contemplated suicide for the second time when he was working as a sub-editor at *The Times*. It wasn't the pressure of work, or the illiteracy of the reporters, which, on this occasion, had upset the balance of his mind, but the thought that he had epilepsy. Years later he wrote: "Epilepsy, cancer and leprosy — these are the three medical terms which rouse the greatest fear in the uninitiated, and at 22 one is unprepared for so final a judgment." Greene rejected the idea of suicide, but he decided that it would be better if he did not marry in case he transmitted the trait.

Greene had been prone to fainting when he was at school and was sent to consult a Harley Street neurologist. Although his parents were informed of the diagnosis, it was considered too dreadful to tell such a young patient. It was only four years later, when Greene had the blackout across his sub-editor's desk, that it was decided to let him in on the secret.

Friends rallied to Greene's support, and he knew that epilepsy had not prevented Dostoevsky from succeeding as a novelist, but he was finally comforted only when the *Times* medical correspondent, Dr McNair Wilson, and Graham's elder brother, told him that neurologists were often mistaken in their diagnosis. Not only was treatment for epilepsy then primitive but the diagnosis had to be made without the advantage of an EEG or an MRI scan.

Cancer is now openly discussed, leprosy is, if treated early, curable — only epilepsy has retained its sinister reputation and is still considered too frightening to be discussed openly.

St Valentine is the patron saint of those suffering from epilepsy, and people suffering from it sometimes make a pilgrimage to Terni, in Italy, where he was a bishop. Rome also claims his burial spot. Others sufferers go to Ruffiac, in France, which is associated with epilepsy because it once had a famous hospital which treated the affliction.

A pilgrimage to St Valentine would never come amiss, but patients are advised to visit a specialist epilepsy clinic first. Although there is some contention about the natural history of epilepsy, most doctors believe that seizures beget seizures and that the sooner someone is treated the better. Sometimes epilepsy disappears spontaneously: after Greene was reassured by *The Times* doctor he never had another attack, and in other cases, after years of trouble-free life, treatment can be withdrawn. When it is, however, there is a relapse rate of up to 40 per cent. The longer the patient has maintained the treatment, the less there is a chance of a relapse.

Treatment for epilepsy is now so good that 75 per cent of patients are so well controlled that they have no seizures. Modern drugs recently introduced to treat epilepsy are often not only more effective but are said to have fewer side-effects.

Apart from migraine, epilepsy is the most common brain disorder — as common as diabetes — but whereas in the south-east health region of England there are 16 diabetic clinics, there is only one for patients with epilepsy.

Epilepsy is the last of the stigmatised diseases, and people are happier to discuss their sexually transmitted diseases, or their fatal malignancy, than they are to admit to having it. More than 1.5



Lois Will and Ruth Waddell ate 204 oysters at the 1925 New York follies. An improvement in sexual appetite was unlikely

A fruitless search for the food of love

SO THAT the readers will be feeding at their best for Valentine's Day, magazines have devoted pages this month to discussion about foods which are thought to have an aphrodisiac value.

Most of the writers have recommended diets which are likely to be of benefit to long-term sexual health and contain foods rich in zinc, selenium, manganese and anti-oxidant vitamins.

For centuries there have been attempts to find a substance which would have an immediate effect on libido. It is doubtful if such a food exists, although there are men who swear that their sex life benefits from yohimbine. Others, of both sexes, believe that ginseng is a powerful stimulant. Presumably this action more than counteracts ginseng's feminising oestrogenic action — otherwise men would find its long-term physical effects surprising and disappointing.

Yohimbine, the principal alkaloid of the bark of the yohimbe tree, is an alpha receptor blocker. It raises blood pressure, increases heart rate, speeds excretion of urine and is claimed to improve both potency and libido.

In both sexes the male hormone testosterone improves libido, whereas in women progesterone, which forms part of combined hormone replacement therapy, usually reduces it. Alcohol increases desire, but it reduces ability and enjoyment.

Most of the recommended foods alleged to have aphrodisiac powers rely upon their appearance to stimulate sexual appetites.

Strokes and the case for surgery

George Harris was expected to continue to work in the City until he was 65, but like most of his generation he has been retired early.

George, now 58, spends the time he would have been crunched over his desk bent over his golf clubs. About eight weeks ago, while he was playing his morning round, he noticed that the grip of his right hand was more feeble than usual and that he had some slight difficulty in speaking. The loss of power in his right hand was such that the game had to be abandoned, but George's small stroke was no more than a transient ischaemic attack (TIA).

Within a few hours his confident voice was once again booming around the house, and his ability to play golf was back to normal.

George's doctor arranged that his carotid arteries, the main arteries in the neck

which feed the blood to the brain, should be scanned. In George's case all was well, the arteries were not unduly narrowed and treatment with daily aspirin to prevent small clots was prescribed.

George was lucky in the outcome of his TIA and in his GP. A recent survey reported in the *Journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners* has shown that although most family doctors are aware that carotid imaging is recommended after a TIA or a small stroke, only 11 per cent arrange one.

Carotid imaging is important in all patients who have had a minor TIA, provided that they are fit enough to be considered for carotid surgery, should it be indicated. Usually the patient should have a life

expectancy of at least three years if surgery is to be considered, and be free of serious cardiac disease which can be associated with narrowed carotid arteries.

A certain number of cases of stenosed, severely narrowed, carotid arteries are detected during routine medicals, when the doctor listens to the neck with a stethoscope to discover if the blood flow is impeded.

Two large clinical trials in Europe and America have demonstrated that arterial surgery to clear the fatty plaques obstructing the artery, usually the internal carotid after the main carotid artery has divided into two, is very worthwhile. The nature of the operation, carotid endarterectomy, and

the investigations needed before it is undertaken, has recently been described in *Pulse* magazine.

The decision to operate is discussed very carefully with the patient and is not taken until after the scan has shown the artery is more than 70 per cent obstructed.

If the scan shows severe stenosis angiography, an X-ray of the artery may be carried out, but this has some risk as there is about a 1 per cent chance of precipitating another stroke.

The dilemma is that failing to operate when the carotid artery is more than 70 per cent stenosed is associated with a 25 per cent chance of suffering a major, possibly fatal, stroke within 18 months. Conversely, the surgery has a 5 per cent chance of causing a stroke. Successful surgery reduces the likelihood of the patient having a further stroke by more than 75 per cent.

Too many doctors fail to order a scan

Illness that targets women

THE timing of a woman's asthma attacks has a close relationship to her hormonal balance. Research from the United States, reported in the *General Practitioner* magazine, analysed the treatment in hospital of 33,269 patients with from acute asthma.

Before the age of ten, boys were found to have twice as much asthma as girls, in the teenage years the sexes were equally affected, but between the ages of 20 and 50 — the reproductive years — women were three times as likely as men to need hospital care. In 46 per cent of these cases the woman's attack had happened during the four days either side of the start of her period.

Pregnancy usually has little effect on asthma, but it is important for the pregnant woman to continue

with her regular treatment. Doctors will always check the asthma treatment she is having at the start of her pregnancy, and it is sometimes as well to change the drug used to one which does not easily cross the placental barrier.

As always, the reference books *MIMS*, the national formulary, and *Martin's* *Drugs and Therapeutics*, are invaluable guides. Inhaled drugs are the treatment of choice during pregnancy because the baby is not damaged by them. Many women experience asthma for the first time at or around the menopause. Unfortunately there is no guarantee that once their hormones have settled down again the asthma will clear. It remains very much more common in women than in men, even in old age.

Irritable Bowel Syndrome

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In an article in *The Times* last week, Dr Thomas Stuttaford commented on *The Sufferers' Guide to Coping with IBS*, published by the IBS Research Team at Central Middlesex Hospital. The response has been tremendous. To ease pressure on the hospital switchboard, would enquirers please contact the Appeal's office at the address below.

In this book, 100 IBS sufferers detail foods and drinks they avoid or find helpful, and give practical advice on managing IBS symptoms. The book costs £11.99 (inc p&p). Proceeds go to IBS research at the hospital. Please make cheques and POs payable to IBS Publications.

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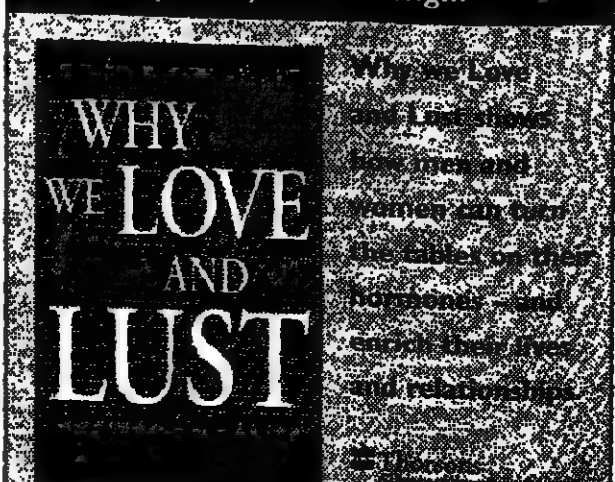
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Can't find anybody to cheer. Quentin Letts reports



When Tiger Woods made a visit last week to his mother's home country of Thailand there was such excitement that the local television stations interrupted their normal programmes to carry the event live. "Now over to our cameras at the airport," announcers jabbered. "Where Tiger Woods is just at this very moment walking down the aircraft steps!"

You would have thought it was the Pope, but the reception was for a 21-year-old golfer who has not yet, let us note, won a major tournament. Despite a locker full of talent, Woods is still but a middling sports presence on the professional golf tour.

What he is, however, is something far more rare and marketable: an African-American pin-up, a black idol. It has not been a good few months for prominent American blacks. O.J. Simpson came badly unstuck in Santa Monica earlier this month, and now seems unlikely to regain the high public standing he had before he was arrested for the murder of his ex-wife. With O.J.'s downfall the public appeal of Johnnie Cochran, his first trial lawyer, and the man who by playing the race card "won the unwinnable case," has probably passed its best.

Bill Cosby had well-chrono-difficulties in January. Cosby, an honest-faced actor with a gift for comic timing, has long been one of America's foremost blacks. He was the first black man to make it big on prime-time network television and his screen personality served as an ideal of genial fatherhood to the entire nation.

When his son Ennis was killed in California the American people at first mourned as one, but then the threat started to unravel. A young woman came forward claiming to be his illegitimate daughter and the star himself made a televised admission that he had been unfaithful to his wife.

We are all human and what he did was nothing worse than many people have done, but the public confession has changed the way America looks at Bill Cosby. Another black idol had fallen and been cracked.

There has been a shortage of female black idols, too. Whitney Houston, she of the big voice and silken ambition, has taken a dent or two from claims about her private life. Anita Hill, whose sex harassment case against Judge Clarence Thomas made her one of the most widely recognised

black women in America a few years ago, has all but vanished from view.

In their place black youngsters now look to the likes of Angela Bassett, the actress who played Tina Turner in *What's Love Got to Do With It*, or to the astronaut, Mae Jemison, first black woman in space. Television's Oprah Winfrey, the enduring agony aunt of black America, also continues to serve as a beacon of African-American achievement.

Add to this such incidents as the violent death in Las Vegas of the rapper, Tupac Shakur, the problems of bad-boy basketball star Dennis Rodman, the continuing image woes of boxer Mike Tyson and, most recently, the sexual harassment allegations which are being made against Sergeant Major Gene McKinney, the black recruit who is the most senior NCO in the US Army. A pattern begins to emerge.

One hears polemicalists lament that there are "not enough African-American heroes," not enough public figures of high repute for young blacks to idolise and of whom to say "that's what I want to be when I grow up". The Simpson and Cosby cases, picked over endlessly by the media, only made matters worse.

That is why Woods has been seized on with such alacrity, why before he has reached the top of his sport. It is also why young blacks in other fields of endeavour are given disproportional encouragement in the US.

In politics there is J.C. Watts, a 39-year-old Southern Republican who gave his party's spoken response to President Clinton's State of the Union address — at the very moment, ironically, that the Simpson verdict came in from Santa Monica. Watts is an accomplished orator and an astute politician, and he made a very much better fist of things than did then Senator Robert Dole after last year's State of the Union.

But it is accepted that he was picked simply on grounds of colour: such is America's desire to give its blacks something, someone to cheer. In athletics, Dominique Dawes, the only black member of America's winning women's Olympic gymnastics team, has gone on to far more interesting things than her white team mates.

She has appeared in a pop video with Prince, she has been in *Grease* on Broadway and she has received numerous awards from black organ-



Contenders for the black throne: gymnast Dominique Dawes, the only black member of the winning American Olympic team, and golfing newcomer Tiger Woods



isations proud to claim her as their own. On New York's Madison Avenue one day I saw her being stopped by an admiring young black fan who sought her autograph. She gave it graciously, aware of her own good fortune.

Not all blacks, however, sit easy with the idea of black figureheads. Professor Obie Clayton, vice-provost for research at the leading black university, Morehouse College in Atlanta, stresses that black role models are more important than black idols.



Politician J.C. Watts

The role model, he explains, is likely to be someone you know or meet in ordinary life — a teacher, perhaps, a pastor, or a senior colleague at work — while the idol will be someone whose example it is probably impossible to follow. "Put it like this — I'm never going to be as good as golf as Tiger Woods," he says. "But young blacks can perhaps hope to live up to certain role models."

"There may not be as many charismatic black leaders today as they were in the times of Martin Luther King," says Professor Clayton, "but that can be a good thing. There are an increasing number of black students in college nowadays, an increasing number of black PhDs. Perhaps they will be the role models of tomorrow."

Professor Clayton is wary about the white media choosing the sort of heroes they think black Americans should have. Matthew Scott, managing editor of *Black Enterprise* magazine, believes that his readers like public figures who have the whiff of rebellion. "They like people who beat the odds, who overcome the system," he says. Examples:

Spike Lee, the film director, or the late US Commerce Secretary Ron Brown, a black man who "beat" the Washington system up to a point — although he was under the scrutiny of federal authorities at the time of his death in a plane crash last year in Bosnia.

The rebellion ingredient is present in Woods. Golf was long seen as a white man's game. Now along comes a half-black, half-oriental kid who lands hundreds of millions of dollars worth of en-

dorsements and knocks a golf ball pretty decently, too.

One name that is seldom mentioned as a black idol, is that of Colin Powell, who is spoken of as a possible Republican party presidential candidate. "He ain't black!" laughed a young black friend of mine in New York. The same is often said of Clarence Thomas, a conservative who was seen by some blacks — surely unfairly — as having betrayed his colour in favour of his right-of-centre ideological beliefs. Can blacks not be right

wing, too? The rise of young blacks such as Woods, Watts and Dawes is something to cheer, but it is only a qualified cheer. Professor Clayton is right to hope that a wider black middle class will reduce the apparent dependency on black champions.

The tendency to support successful black people simply because they are black is not an attractive one. It smacks of quota-ism and is as unappealing as the triumphant crowing from many sections of Jewish America recently when it

emerged that the Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, came from Jewish stock. The increasing tribalism of the United States, once the melting pot of the world, is a sorry business.

A few months ago, says the engaging Woods, the only time he thought about race was "when the media asked me". The best thing that could happen to *fin de siècle* America would be for all of us to concentrate not on his skin colour but on the brilliance of his swing.

New old swingers in town

It is both a blessing and a bit embarrassing that when human beings do something for the first time, they often presume that it is the first time it has ever been done. Contrary evidence rarely deters them: look at new parents.

The blessing is that this egotistic belief helps us to maintain a sense of wonderment in the world. It also gives creative inspiration to artistic types: otherwise Wordsworth would have just looked at that host of golden daffodils and said, "So what's new?"

Joe Joseph discovers that age should not be measured in years

Now David Bailey, having reached the grand age of 59, has decided that he is not actually old. Not old-fashioned, straightforward, up-and-down old. David is still a brilliant photographer. He feels sprightly. Still fancies women. Still brims with creative ideas. So do Dave's ageing chums, people like Mick Jagger and Jack Nicholson, who both like a night on the tiles with a bird or two, but

who still have enough stamina left to cut CDs and make movies in the morning.

"No, David Bailey is not plain 'old'," he said this week. He is one of the "New Old", along with Mick and Jack: they are the advance shock troops of a new phenomenon. "People used to say you can't be a pop star at 60," said Bailey, "but Mick will be." He likens himself and his "new old" mates to supposedly rare predecessors like Picasso, who worked well into old age.

But are the "new old" all that new? Or that unique that you have to be a 1960s vintage photographer, or rock singer, or movie star to qualify? History is chock-full of people who not only carried on making a noise well into old age, but who often only began making any noise at all after their peers were drawing pensions. People like Harry Truman, Coco Chanel, Joseph Conrad, Boris Karloff, and even Colonel Sanders, who only started his southern fried chicken business after he turned 60.

Daniel Defoe was in trade until the age of 60, when he decided to experiment with a new literary form called the novel, an experiment that gave us *Robinson Crusoe* and *Moll Flanders*. Isaac Bashevis Singer, who wrote mostly in Yiddish, was in his fifties before word of his talent spread. Barbara Woodhouse, reputedly the fastest dog trainer ever, said: "Life began for me at 70."

Isaac Hirschfeld, the man credited with coining the phrase "senior citizen" never even had a steady job until he was 75. He stayed inventive to the last. In his nineties, he summoned his family to his hospital bedside for what they assumed would be a profound deathbed statement, but which turned out to be: "The nurses around here are big enough to be playing professional football."

Crowds gazed and cooed for last year's Cezanne exhibition in London, but it was only towards the end of his own life that Cezanne was noticed. "I have made some progress," he wrote to a friend, "but why so belatedly and why so painfully?" The American painter Edward Hopper was well into his sixties before the world fell for his dark, shadowy streets and his all-night diners.

Jazz pianist and composer Rubie Blake was out of fashion for nearly half a century before ragtime was rediscovered in the Seventies, when Blake himself was nearer 90. "If I'd known I was going to live this long," he quipped, "I would have taken better care of myself." But he was still spry enough to play on the White House lawn at the age of 95.

"There is nothing more remarkable in the life of Socrates," said Montaigne, "than that he found time in his old age to learn to dance and play on instruments and thought it time well spent."

So Jagger and Bowie can go dancing in the street all night and they'd still be nothing to raise Socrates's eyebrows.

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Europhobia is bad for business

There is no alternative to EMU,
says Christopher Haskins

The existence of the European Union is a recognition that the concept of absolute national economic and political sovereignty is gradually being replaced by a sharing of economic and political sovereignty between the members. The objective of establishing a single currency, due to start in 1999, is enshrined in the Treaty of Rome, and was recognised by all members, including Britain, when they signed it.

Remarkably, of the 15 members, only Britain and, to a lesser extent, Denmark have genuine reservations about the political direction the EU is taking. Britain is alone in its desire to opt out of monetary union — the Danish krone is already fixed against the mark. Eleven other countries seek to participate in the EU on the terms laid down by the Treaty of Rome, the Single European Act and the Maastricht Treaty. So 25 countries broadly recognise the benefits of half a century of peace, prosperity and co-operation. Britain alone continues to equivocate.

Various British political groups reject the whole idea. The political sceptics, largely on the Right, cling tenaciously, if hopelessly, to an image of national sovereignty that has more relevance to Victorian imperialism than to the 21st century. The economic doubters, mainly on the Left, cherish a Keynesian national solution to problems, more than 50 years after Keynes himself recognised that the world had changed, by signing up to the Bretton Woods agreement of 1944.

Further economic and political integration is inevitable

British political sovereignty died in 1943, when Churchill was forced to hand over the direction of the war to the American President Roosevelt. After the war, as a member of Nato, we ceded further sovereignty to America, in return for guarantees of security. British economic sovereignty died in 1944, when the Bretton Woods settlement created the International Monetary Fund. Thereafter, British monetary policy was determined ultimately by the international financial markets: today only the United States can claim economic self-sufficiency.

Yet 40 years after Suez, people delude themselves that there are independent political and economic options available to Britain outside the EU. Right-wing nationalists still envisage the possibility of a national war, and argue that the Maastricht Treaty denies them this option. In their quiet moments, the romantic Right must recognise that at the very least the EU has rendered a war between the nations of Western Europe inconceivable. And the Left must accept that international economic co-operation ensures that the catastrophe of pre-war depression could not happen in the modern world.

Political Euophobia is easier to counter than economic scepticism. Ultimately the right-wing would take Britain out of the EU, and many on the Right have the honesty to say so. But public opinion

would reject such a wild proposition, and all our friends, including the Americans, would quickly point out its folly. The position of those who are politically pro-European but economically sceptical is more puzzling. They seem to hope that the European development can be frozen on their terms, and refuse to recognise that further economic and political integration is inevitable. If they hold sway, Britain will opt out of the next stages of political and economic evolution for a few years, and then realise its mistake and rejoin the process on less advantageous terms.

Of course there are risks when radical new policies of economic and political interdependence are being pursued. But the biggest hurdles have already been overcome. The European Court of Justice, strengthened in the last decade, was important to the Thatcher Government in tackling cheating within the single market, and is working well. Monetary policies are converging across Europe, as are the economic cycles of the member states, though the poorer, less disciplined Mediterranean countries still have some way to go.

The benefits of economic and monetary union are well chronicled — completion of the single market, increased competition, lower prices, lower inflation, lower interest rates, more investment and jobs. Its dangers are equally obvious, the inability of many members to meet the convergence criteria from the outset being the main one.

Some fears are overstated. High unemployment is driven by technology rather than Brussels. Nowadays, capital moves to locations with cheap, productive labour, rather than the other way round as in the industrial revolution. The minimum wage is a national rather than a European proposition, and the Social Chapter cannot force social security costs on unwilling members.

Monetary union will probably begin in two years' time, and there will be a number of initial starters: Germany, France, Austria, Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, Ireland and possibly Finland. Other countries may have to start later: Italy, Spain, Portugal, as well as a more reluctant Sweden and Denmark. It may take Greece longer to qualify.

It is perfectly feasible for Britain to be in at the outset, or for us to wait a while, but in the long term it is sensible to be an early rather than a late starter. But to rule ourselves out of monetary union now would be stupid and self-destructive. Permanent self-exclusion would almost certainly lead to a wholly disastrous withdrawal from the EU. When the case for monetary union and for the EU is eventually put to the British people, it is likely that, as in 1975, the result will be resoundingly positive.

The author is chairman of Northern Foods.



See it Germany's way

Kohl's predicament is like Bismarck's.
Let's not make the same mistakes again

Whatever European policy we want to follow, Germany is the country with which we must in the end reach agreement; that would be true even in the extreme instance of Britain deciding to disengage from the European Union. At present, the German economy is going through a difficult period, with its highest unemployment since the 1930s. German industry has extremely high labour costs. Companies are investing massively overseas, exporting jobs in order to avoid the costs of German labour. German taxes are among the highest in Europe, and the attempts to reform social expenditure and taxation have achieved disappointingly little. Nevertheless, Germany is the geographical heartland of Europe, with the largest population and the most powerful economy.

The British need to understand the cultural and historical experience of Germany if we are to establish a more sympathetic relationship. In some ways, the British and the Germans, who are both Nordic and Protestant, have cultures much more like each other than either is to the big nations of the Latin and Catholic tradition, France, Italy and Spain. Yet Britain largely fails to understand the German attitude towards the future of Europe, and Germany largely fails to understand why the British public reacts as it does. In particular we should try harder to understand the achievements as well as the disasters of German history: the two hang together.

In the past 200 years, the Germans have experienced the shock of three great military defeats, first by Napoleon, then in 1918 and in 1945. Britain has not experienced anything remotely comparable to these devastating events. In each case, the Germans made a national response to the impact of defeat. In the 19th century, they developed a nationalist philosophy of the State, particularly in the writings of Fichte and Hegel, and worked, almost throughout the century, towards the unification of Germany. This was accomplished by Bismarck in the 1860s and 1870s. The Prussian-led Empire which Bismarck created was itself overthrown by defeat in 1918; that was followed by the financial collapse of the 1920s hyperinflation and the industrial collapse of the world slump in the early 1930s. The response in the 1930s was to take the cult of the State a stage further, leading to Hitler's

dictatorship. The Nazis added a much more extreme doctrine of the authority of the leader, the *Führerprinzip*, and a naïve, neo-Darwinist doctrine of competitive racial survival. Their conduct was incredibly brutal.

This regime led inevitably to the catastrophe of 1945. After the war, the Germans adopted the political doctrine of the victors, just as they had imitated Napoleon. They were particularly under the influence of the United States and the occupation of the American Zone. They then applied their traditional virtues of thoroughness and efficiency to making the new democratic state work well. With the break up of the Soviet Union and the reunification of Germany in 1990, this post-1945 response could be seen a historic success, just as the defeat of France in 1870 was the culmination of the Bismarck era.

The British have found it difficult to recognise the quality of this post-war success, and the solid virtues that were needed to produce it. Germans are rightly proud of the achievement of the past 50 years. Since 1945, Germany has been democratic, co-operative, productive and helpful to all the other nations of Europe. Britain's post-war record includes the withdrawal from Empire with extraordinarily little conflict and the economic liberalisation of the 1980s; that is by no means a bad achievement, but Germany's has been the greater of the two.

There are parallels between the situations of Chancellor Kohl's Germany and Bismarck's. In the 1870s, Germany suffered a severe industrial recession, in the 1880s Bismarck regarded Germany as a largely satisfied power, and his diplomacy was intended to protect his achievements. That phase of history ended in 1890, when Bismarck was dismissed by the young Kaiser Wilhelm II. The most notable thing about the Kaiser was that he did not know what to do next: his neurotic adventurism stemmed from both the instability of an insecure and disorganised character

and the absence of an agreed historic mission.

Now Germany has come to another historic crossroads. Helmut Kohl wants to protect and perpetuate his achievements. He sees the monetary and political unification of Europe as the best way to do that. Yet sooner or later the grand old man will go. What should Germany do next? Of course it is not the great power that it was in the 1890s: then Germany was the dominant military power of the world's dominant continent; now it is a modest non-nuclear military power in a Europe that is certainly running behind America and probably behind Asia as well. What Germany does is not as important as it was a hundred years ago, but it is still important to Europe. Fear of Germany is not

justified, but any other European country has to come to terms with the reality of German influence.

Last week, Professor Michael Stürmer, who runs a think-tank near Munich, was speaking in London about the problems of the single currency. He favours the single currency but sees the difficulties quite clearly. He believes that a single currency would promote world financial stability and help Germany as an exporting nation. In London he pointed to two contradictions. The first is that the Germans regard the mark as the symbol of Germany's post-war success: the euro would have to be as good as the mark for them to accept it. German industry wants a relatively soft euro, believing that a euro that devalued the mark would help industry to export.

The second contradiction lies in Professor Stürmer's fear that the French will blame the Germans for a euro which the French associate with high unemployment, while the Germans will blame the French for a euro that is softer than the mark. If France wins control of the European Central Bank, that will signal a politicised euro, which the Germans are determined not to have.

Beyond Professor Stürmer's analysis lies an even more fundamental

question. Britain is not going to join the single currency, at least not in the first round. Yet it will be hard to keep Italy and Spain out. If the euro goes ahead, Germany will be the leader of a single currency, with a Latin majority of an unstable financial history. The currency markets will see Germany as the guarantor of a euro which is much weaker than the mark. This is not only a currency question, but the main European question. Who will pay the bill?

Each of the large European nations wants something different. The Germans want to create a Europe that preserves the very great post-war achievements of Germany. They want a currency as good as the mark and a political constitution for Europe remarkably like their own federal constitution. They want a Europe on the German model, but not at German expense.

The French want a Franco-centric Europe, dominated by the skills of the French civil service. They are prepared to have a Europe which is German in form, because they think they can make it French in practice. The Italians want Europe to solve the political problems they have not been able to solve for themselves; they would also be happy to create Italian debts at German rates of interest. The Spanish like the European subsidies. Britain wants to remain an independent island nation while being part of the European system. France and Britain, in their different ways, both have an independent but nationalist point of view: Italy and Spain belong to a much more dependent culture.

The problem is to reconcile these different national objectives. The single currency proposal has made that more difficult. It is dividing rather than uniting Europe. What is certain is that nothing permanent can be achieved unless it satisfies Germany's interests and reassures German public opinion. After the election, Britain and Germany should at least try to talk out these national hopes and fears. In 1889, shortly before he fell, Bismarck put out feelers for an Anglo-German entente: Lord Salisbury turned them down because he thought they would be anti-French. That mistake may have led, 25 years later, to the First World War. In 1997 Britain and Germany each need to develop an imaginative sympathy for the other's historic point of view. At present neither country is very good at doing that.

William
Rees-Mogg

Swanning in

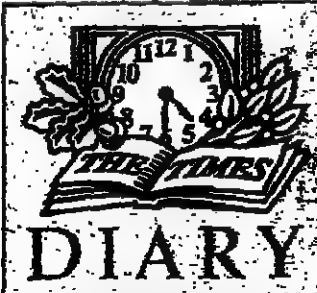
THE TALK at the ballet barre concerns Diana, Princess of Wales. She is said to be a contender for the part of one of the 70 swans at an audition this Friday for a gala performance by the English National Ballet of Swan Lake at the Albert Hall in the summer.

The Princess is hoping to attend the selection audition of the swans at the Kensington rehearsal rooms of the ballet. Diana is a patron of the company and a close friend of its director, Derek Deane, and she has long shown a deep interest in dance.

The performance in June will star Alina Asti Muratova, the top nuu at the Kirov, who is considered by many to be the best female dancer in the world. Diana's experience extends to a swirl with Wayne Sleep and some moshing around while listening to Dr Feelgood on her Walkman.

"There will be more swans in this production than ever before, and we hope the Princess will appear on stage," says a ballet-mane friend of Diana's. "She is planning to come to the audition and something may well come of it. Whatever happens she will be at the Albert Hall on the night."

Detention is in order for Nigel de Gruchy, general secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers. Yesterday The Times reported his attack on government plans to sack teachers if their pupils perform badly. "To call this latest measure Victorian or draconian is an insult to Victoria and Dracula." Er, what? "Doesn't



Dracula come from Draconian?" asked a confused de Gruchy yesterday. Had there been more Classics in schools, he might have known about Draco the ancient Athenian legislator. "Perhaps I should have stuck to Victoria," he conceded.

Home turf

AFTER months of roaming the hotels of Knightsbridge, the Italy and Chelsea footballer Gianluca Vialli has found a permanent pad close to Sloane Square. Vialli looked at it in August, but months of renovations and waiting for his girlfriend's approval mean he only decided to take it, as England took on Italy last night. The flat has three bedrooms, two bathrooms and according to his agent, Adolfo Still, is "modest". It is close to Vialli's preferred Italian

restaurants, San Lorenzo, a favourite of the Princess of Wales, and L'Incontro, where the owner, Gino "as in Gineili" Santini, is thrilled. "Gianluca is a close friend and it's great to have him near. He comes in twice a week, but takes care of himself. Tiramisu and no grappa."

Old look

FASHIONABLE society holds no fears for Eric Newby, soldier, writer and conqueror of the Hindu Kush. At a reception on Tuesday night at the Imperial War Museum to mark the 50th anniversary



Eric Newby: selectively impressed

of Christian Dior's "New Look" exhibition, Field Marshal Lord Brannan gave the opening address. "Who is this gesser, anyway?" demanded Newby, sloping off to find a chair as Brannan recalled his days on the parade ground.

Next up was the Heritage Secretary, Virginia Bottomley. Newby's verdict: "I think she rather likes the sound of her own voice."

Relief came in the form of Dorey Russell, prima ballerina at the Royal Ballet, whose message was brief. "What's her name?" slavered Newby. "Could you write it down for me?"

Reports that Elton John would be giving two concerts in Hong Kong to mark the colony's hand-over to the Chinese appear to be premature. Sadly for the Governor, Chris Patten, who is something of a fan, the gigs will not be taking place because John's amplifiers are too loud for Hong Kong's noise restrictions.

Heart to heart

ROMANTIC of the week in this most romantic of weeks is Fred Ingrams, son of the former Private Eye Editor Richard — who is himself living with a young blonde of recent acquaintance. Fred, a divorcee and terrific



Romantics: Ingrams and Arie

painter is 33 on St Valentine's Day and is engaged to Laura Arie, with whom he has set up a design company Arie & Ingrams. The couple met at House 8 Garden, where both worked in the design department. To mark their commitment, they will tomorrow present each other with silver gilt loving cups adorned with cockle heart shells.

Spare us political justice

Magnus Linklater
on the need for
judicial discretion

The honesty shown by Mr Justice Alton was refreshing. After a month's trial, a full rehearsal of the evidence in court, and a conclusive verdict from the jury, he admitted that he "still did not know the whole truth" about the murder of Eve Howell. Yesterday, having given himself an extra day to listen to background reports from defence counsel, he confirmed the sentence and said that in his view Mrs Howell's husband, David, bore more of the responsibility than their two sons, Glenn and John.

Here was a judge exercising discretion — not so much with what Edmund Burke described as "the cold neutrality of an impartial judge", but rather with the humanity of one concerned by the wider interests of justice. I guess that most of Judge Alton's colleagues on the Bench approved of his action, however unusual. Their responsibilities, after all, do not end with the sentence: there is the nature of the punishment to consider, and that raises a wide range of questions. Is it right, for instance, to remand a 19-year-old woman on her first drug offence to a prison with a long record of suicides? Should a young tearaway on his third burglary be sent to join two hardened old lags in an overcrowded cell? Some judges — not many — go to the trouble of visiting the prisons to which they send those they have sentenced. It tempers the decisions they make; it makes for better justice.

That, however, is a million miles from the theme running through the Government's Crime (Sentencing) Bill, which comes before the Lords again today, or the Scottish Crime and Punishment Bill, which was debated on Tuesday. Both are informed more by retribution rather than by reason. The scope of judges to vary a sentence on the basis of individual cases is to be severely curtailed. On parole and remission, on automatic life-sentences for certain offences, and on mandatory minimum sentences for repeat burglars and drug-dealers — all areas where judges have traditionally exercised discretion — the punishment will be decreed by statute. The implication of both Bills is clear: judges can no longer be trusted to deal with the criminal element in our society; or, as the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Bingham, put it, judges are held to be "for some unexplained reason indifferent to crime".

It is an extraordinary notion, but one that influences both the Home Secretary, Michael Howard, and the Scottish Secretary, Michael Forsyth. They believe that current sentencing policy favours the criminal at the expense of the victim to such an extent that the public is "scandalised" by it. The hostility of judges to how the new Bills merely demonstrates how out of touch they are with popular opinion. Reform is urgently required.

But if that is right, then the Government has been extraordinarily inconsistent. As recently as 1993, as the Scottish judge Lord McCloskey pointed out in the Lords this week, a very different set of measures was introduced. The Prisoners and Criminal Proceedings Act set out standards of sentencing and parole in Scotland which harmonised with those in England, and were, in the view of the Government at the time, in the best interests of prisoners, prison officials and the public. This came after a long period of consultation, and confirmed a sentencing policy that allowed some criminals to serve as little as a half or two-thirds of their sentence. Now, it seems, just three years later, the public has become suspicious of such laxity.

So what has happened in the meantime? It is not as if our jails are being emptied of criminals. Britain has the highest prison population in Europe, and it is growing so fast that very soon there will be a need to commission floating prison ships to accommodate it. This prison population is likely to become a cauldron of resentment with the virtual abolition of parole and the introduction of longer sentences. There is no sign that judges have become more lenient. On the contrary, they, as much as ministers, are only too aware of the risks they run in handing down sentences which are deemed too light. Nor is there anything in the crime statistics to suggest that in three years Britain has become intolerably violent.

The answer lies, depressingly, in the Government's need to demonstrate that it is tough on law and order — and the Opposition's reluctance to challenge it. This leaves the judges to defend themselves. So far they are making a good fist of it, with defeats for the Government in the Lords, and an undoubted superiority when it comes to rhetoric. Lord McCloskey calls the legislation "arbitrary, ill-informed and populist". And Lord Bingham declares that "if our people's thinking is to be judged by the thinking which animates this Bill, I for one will shrink from the judgment of history".

In the end, however, most opinion will be less influenced by the stirring sounds of a constitutional battle than by the simple question of fairness. On the whole I would still prefer to be judged and sentenced by Mr Justice Alton on the merits of my case than by the political instincts of Messrs Howard and Forsyth.

P-H-S

Spare no political justice
Magnus Linklater

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BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 13 1997

2W SL

Jobless figure at lowest in six years

By Philip Bassett
INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

THE number of jobless fell to 1,815,300 in January, the lowest level for six years, giving a rate of 6.5 per cent. The fall was the second-biggest seasonal adjustment reduction since modern unemployment records began in January 1971. Adjusted unemployment is now down by 1,655,800 since its peak in December 1992, and is down by 391,500 over the past year alone.

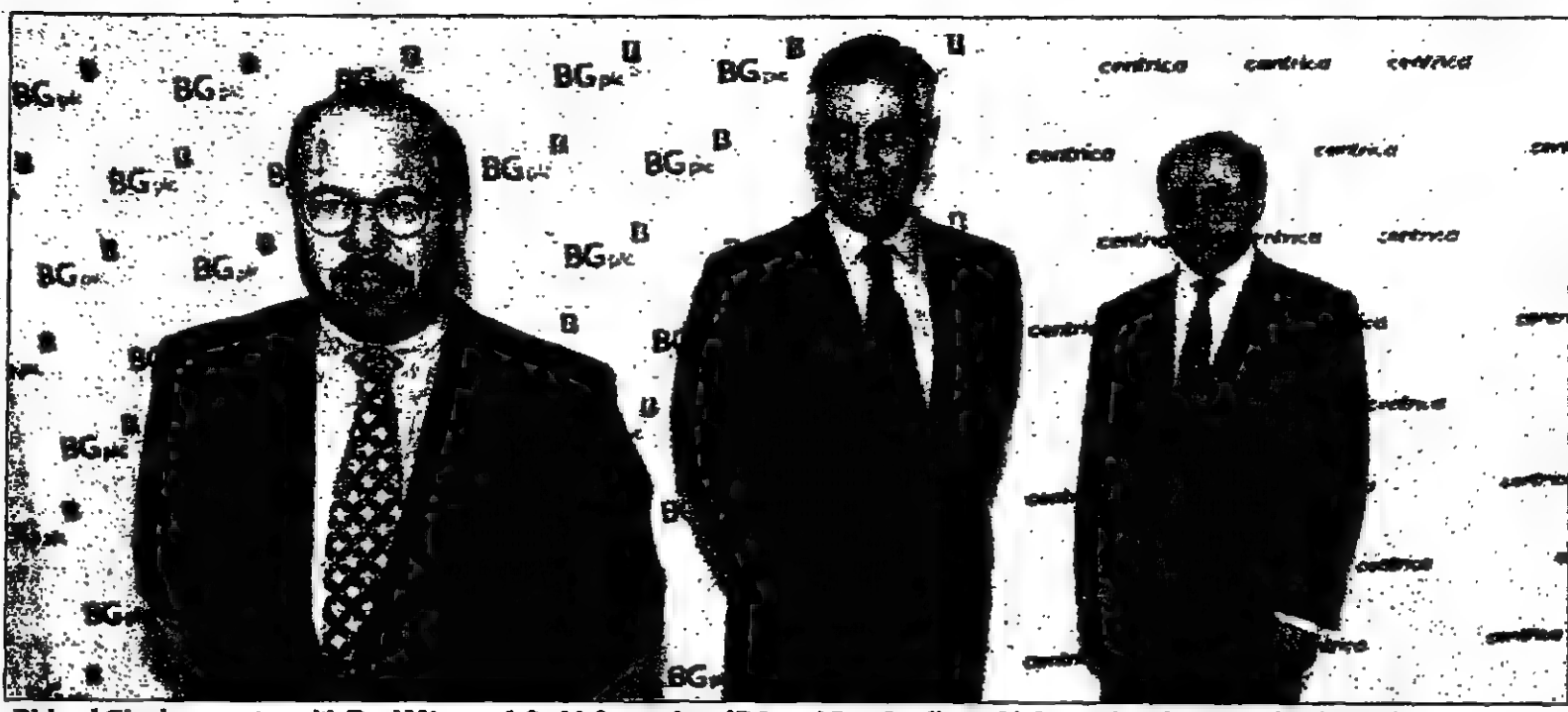
However, unadjusted unemployment — the precise number of people out of work and claiming benefit — rose, by 39,550 to 1,907,756. A large seasonal adjustment factor of 107,200 for January, when many people lose temporary jobs after Christmas, led to the fall in the adjusted total.

Whitehall officials again suspended estimation of the falling trend in unemployment, mainly because of so far unquantifiable effects on the claimant count of the introduction of the Job Seekers Allowance (JSA). Since the JSA came in, the average monthly fall in unemployment has leapt to 63,900, against 19,300 over the previous six months and 16,300 over the previous 12 months.

Labour attacked the JSA effect on the count. David Blunkett, the party's employment spokesman, issued a 12-page analysis of it, and said: "137,000 people have disappeared from the claimant count since October 1996, not because they have found a job but solely as a result of the introduction of JSA."

The drop substantially exceeded market expectations, and City analysts also criticised the JSA effect. Kevin Darlington, of Hoare Govett, said that the JSA "means these numbers come with a health warning".

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Richard Giordano, centre, with David Varney, left, chief executive of BG, and Roy Gardiner, chief executive of Centrica, in Birmingham yesterday

Clarke rebuffs Bank's calls for higher rates

By Janet Bush and Philip Webster

KENNETH CLARKE insisted yesterday that there was no need to increase base rates even as the Bank of England repeated its calls for tighter money.

The Chancellor's determination to neutralise the message of the Bank of England's latest *Inflation Report*, published yesterday, was clear in his decision to give a number of high-profile radio and television interviews as well as to comment at length on the *Financial Times* campaign trail.

In his *Inflation Report*, the Bank repeated its call for a modest rise in rates. As expected, the Bank revised upwards its longer-term forecast for underlying inflation to about 3

per cent "and rising" at the end of its two-year forecasting period. This is well above the Government's target of 2.5 per cent or less. This assumption, as always in the *Inflation Report*, is based on unchanged interest rates.

However, Mervyn King, the Bank's director of economics, admitted that he does not know how large a rise in rates is needed and that sterling's sharp rise has created "huge uncertainty" in the short-term outlook.

Howard Davies, deputy governor, said on Tuesday that the Chancellor and the Bank only disagreed over a quarter point, an assertion confirmed by Mr Clarke. The Chancellor said: "The Governor and myself have a slight difference of opinion about

where inflation will be in a couple of years' time and I reckon he's a quarter of 1 per cent wrong." He said the economy was recovering extremely strongly, but showed no signs of speeding up and that he was not at the stage where he had to put the monetary brakes on.

It appears that the Bank's view of rates has, if anything, softened since late last year. At the December monetary meeting, the Bank said that if the Chancellor refused to raise rates by a quarter point it would then push for a half-point rise in January and February. Now it seems that the debate revolves around only a quarter point again.

The key area of disagreement is over the impact of the exchange rate, which the Chancellor has repeatedly de-

scribed as very deflationary. The Bank said the outlook for inflation in the short term had improved since November, since when sterling has risen 7 per cent. It now forecasts that underlying inflation will drop to a trough of well below 2.5 per cent in the second half of this year. It is then forecast to rise throughout 1998.

The Bank said that, in the short run, sterling's rise would lead to a fall in inflation as import prices fell. This, it argues, is primarily a one-off impact on domestic prices rather than a continuing force reducing the underlying rate of inflation.

After that, sterling's strength is likely to continue to damp down inflation because it will cut net trade, but the extent of this will depend on why the pound has risen and

therefore how long it will remain strong. Overall, the Bank is assuming that the pound's rise is temporary. Alistair Darling, Shadow Chief Secretary, said the dispute between Mr Clarke and the Governor called into question the strength of the recovery. "What is clear from what the Governor is saying is that he doesn't believe the Chancellor is going to meet his inflation target by the end of this Parliament, something he has always promised."

The dispute between the Governor and the Chancellor of the Exchequer not only exposes the fundamental weaknesses in the British economy, but it is also deeply destabilising and it does cast doubt on whether this recovery can last.

British Gas job cuts out of control

By Christine Buckley
INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

BRITISH GAS yesterday admitted that job losses at the company had run out of control and revealed that by the end of this month it will have cut 35,000 jobs since 1993. The toll overshoots the original target set out four years ago by 10,000. It is also 5,000 more than a revised plan outlined 18 months ago.

Richard Giordano, chairman, detailed the job losses at the extraordinary meeting in Birmingham to approve the demerger of British Gas into two companies. Only a handful of shareholders showed dissenting voting cards to the resolution. More than 330,000 Sids had voted by proxy on the demerger, voting ten to one in favour. The opponents were largely rallied by Noel Falconer, long-time antagonist of the British Gas board and a proponent of waiting before demerging.

British Gas will, from Monday, become two companies — Centrica, the gas supply business with a stake in the Morecambe Bay gasfield, and BG, the Transco and international activities business.

Further job cuts have been threatened by the company, depending on the outcome of pricing controls for the pipelines business, which are before the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Mr Giordano conceded that the job losses had run too quickly to maintain important skills in the business and had led to a lot of British Gas's service problems.

He said that the large redundancy programme meant jobs disappeared from the business at too fast a pace to maintain service levels. "It had got out of control," Mr Giordano said after the meeting.

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET SERVICES

FTSE 100	4304.3	(+10)
FTSE All share	2077.09	(-0.53)
Nikkei	18485.56	(+226.79)
New York	8961.23	(+103.52)
Dow Jones	892.77	(+13.18)
S&P Composite	882.3	(+13.18)

US RATE

Federal Funds	4 1/4%	(9%)
Long Bond	6 7/8%	(97 1/2%)
Yield	6.71%	(6.71%)

LONDON MONEY

3-month Interbank	6 1/4%	(9 3/4%)
12-month Interbank	11 1/4%	(11 1/4%)

STERLING

New York	1.6913	(1.6970)
London	1.6338	(1.6496)
DM	2.7485	(2.7482)
FF	2.5857	(2.5872)
Sfr	2.3613	(2.3647)
Yen	202.30	(202.19)
S index	106.3	(106.3)

US \$ \$ \$ \$

London	1.6883	(1.6773)
DM	2.7203	(2.7203)
Sfr	1.4338	(1.4475)
Yen	194.25	(192.30)
S index	106.3	(106.3)

TELECOMS

BT	1.6913	(1.6970)
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WALL STREET

Dow Jones	8961.23	(+103.52)
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WALL STREET

Dow Jones	8961.23	(+103.52)
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Financial services in store at Tesco

By Martin Waller

TESCO will today fire the latest shot in the supermarket wars with the launch of an in-store financial services to provide both a credit card and a range of financial services, including mortgages, in a joint venture with the Royal Bank of Scotland.

At the heart of the scheme is the Royal Bank's Direct Line insurance subsidiary. Customers of Tesco will be able to obtain online insurance and other financial products at special outlets in selected stores at the same time as they buy their groceries.

The plans have been under development for months, but both companies had hoped to keep them under wraps until the official launch. Terry Leahy, Tesco's chief executive, refused to respond to calls from *The Times* last night.

The news comes days after Safeway launched its own debit card and J Sainsbury was awarded a banking licence. Tesco's plans are thought to include a new card that will allow goods to be bought on credit and pay interest on customers' balances.

This is similar to Safeway's ABC Bonus Account card, operated in conjunction with



Wood, consultant

Toymaker outlaws Barbie disc

By Jason Nisse

THE prospect has been raised of lawyers from Mattel, the toymaker, reclaiming CD-Roms from children's computers after it took out a restraining order to prevent sales or distribution of a game called *Barbie and her Magic Horse*.

Mattel claims that the game, which is not made by its recently formed interactive offshoot, infringes the trademark for its doll. Mattel has been launching its own computer games, including *Barbie Fashion*.

Lovell White Durrant, Mattel's lawyer, has taken out an injunction against six leading toy and computer products retailers, including Dixons and Toys 'R Us. It stops them selling *Barbie and her Magic Horse* and demands that they destroy all their stocks and supply the names and addresses of anyone to whom it has sold the CD-Rom.

Neither Lovell White Durrant nor Mattel would discuss why they had asked for this information and would not comment on whether they would be trying to reclaim the CD-Roms from customers.

National Power in pension action

By Gavin Lumsden

NATIONAL POWER has issued a summons against the nine trustees of its pension scheme in an attempt to get legal approval for its use of pension surpluses in 1993 and 1996.

The highly unusual move follows last week's ruling by Julian Farrant, the Pensions Ombudsman, against National Grid. Dr Farrant ordered National Grid to pay back £46.3 million of surpluses it had used to fund redundancies and early retirements. The ruling has landed the electricity industry with a potential £1 billion bill.

According to the summons, National Power used some of the surplus to take a contribution holiday from the Electricity Supply Pension Scheme (ESPS).

The ESPS, which has more than 218,000 members and assets exceeding £14 billion, produced more money than it needed to meet its obligations in 1992 and again in 1995.

It has been a matter of great controversy whether such surpluses belong to companies sponsoring schemes or the schemes' members.

National Power would not say how much it had taken from

the scheme or whether it had used the surpluses to pay for redundancies. However, latest available figures show that the number of employees contributing to the scheme has fallen from 10,000 to 4,452 in the past five years. The scheme has £23 billion in assets.

The company also denied that it was preventing the scheme's 30,000 members from complaining to Dr Farrant. However, the Pensions Ombudsman's office confirmed that it was unable to investigate cases under legal action.

Both sides were unaware of any complaints having been made by former or existing National Power employees.

National Power added that it was seeking clarification in the interests of the company, employees and pensioners.

National Power is the first of the 21 power companies to go to law since the decision, although National Grid is likely to appeal against the Ombudsman later this month. The summons was issued by Linklaters & Paines, National Power's solicitor. Among the trustees it names are Hugh Feldon, Raymond Smith and Roger Witcomb.

Millennium exhibition job for Muirhead

By Jason Nisse

BILL MUIRHEAD, one of the founders of M&C Saatchi, the advertising agency which invented the "New Labour, New Danger" slogan for the Conservatives, has been brought in to help the Millennium exhibition at Greenwich as director of communications.

Mr Muirhead will go on secondment from M&C, but will be paid by the new company being set up to run the

exhibition, Millennium Central. His salary, being paid out of a budget expected to include £200 million of lottery funding, has not been disclosed, but he is one of the best-paid people in the advertising business.

While at Saatchi & Saatchi, which he left dramatically two years ago, he ran the US operation and was paid an annual salary of \$550,000, plus a car, a free apartment in one of the best areas of New York and a bonus equal to 1 per

cent of new business won for the agency. The role at Millennium Central has been created by Bob Ayling, the British Airways chief executive who is also chairman of Millennium Central. Mr Ayling is a close friend of Lord Saatchi, who was recently made a working Conservative peer, and BA is one of the main clients of M&C.

Jenny Page, the former head of the Millennium Commission, has also

been tempted to Millennium Central, where she is now chief executive.

Her move came only weeks before the commission met to decide whether to grant the project the lottery funding it needs to get off the ground. Meanwhile Mr Ayling and Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, have been approaching business leaders to try to elicit their support for the project.

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Gas does splits to genial round of complaints

By Christine Buckley
Industrial Correspondent

SHAREHOLDERS of British Gas convening in Birmingham yesterday to approve the company's demerger were in comparatively good mood, compared with the wholesale anger of two years ago when Cedric Brown, the chief executive, was in danger of being lynched. Richard Giordano faced just one attempt to oust him as chairman, another to stop him chairing the Birmingham meeting and a

stream of complaints over customer service. Opening the floor to questions from the 470 shareholders, his plea to them "not to devote time to individual service complaints" sounded unduly optimistic — this was the company that harassed thousands of customers with red reminders without the courtesy of an initial bill; that left customers on service contracts with non-functioning central heating systems in the depths of winter; and answered the phone within a reasonable period only 40 per cent of the time.

The first move to get Mr Giordano, knight of the British Empire for services to industry, removed as chairman was made by Neville Goldrein, a former Conservative council leader on Merseyside, who has had a running battle with British Gas over direct debit problems for nearly a year. To applause from around the room he accused Mr Giordano of heading a management that had led the company to ineptitude.

Next came Simon Israel, from London, who accused Mr Giordano, a former New York

lawyer, of "arrogance and bullying tactics". Mr Giordano survived both attempts. He must be looking forward to the chairmanship of BG — the rump of British Gas minus its domestic customers.

British Gas will be hoping that in its incarnation as Centrica, the retail division can begin to put its problems behind it and work at establishing a company that is not a laughing stock for service. But some shareholders believe those problems should have been addressed before British Gas decided to split its interests.

BCC joins 'neutrals' in run-up to election

By Philip Bassett, Industrial Editor

BRITAIN faces the most crucial election for business in decades, leaders of chambers of commerce said yesterday as they set out a business agenda for an incoming government.

The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) also became the latest business organisation not to endorse the Conservatives, preferring instead to adopt a strictly politically neutral stance in the run-up to the election campaign.

The BCC's declaration of political neutrality is in line with similar statements from the Confederation of British Industry and even the free-market Institute of Directors.

BCC leaders acknowledged that the majority of small firms which affiliated to local chambers of commerce would probably tend to be Conservative supporters, although they

said it was likely that some managers and owners of the 100,000 member companies would support Labour and the Liberal Democrats.

Ministers regard the adoption of political neutrality by Britain's principal business bodies as giving support to Labour, which they feel sure individual companies do not feel. But BCC leaders denied that in not endorsing the programme of any one political party they were undermining what the Conservatives have seen previously as a natural area of support.

Ian Peters, BCC deputy director-general, said: "We are not interested in arguing the case for any one party. We want every political party to respond to the business agenda."

Dr Peters described the coming poll as "one of the most crucial elections for business in decades" and added: "Whatever the result of the election, politicians must listen to business if the health of the British economy is to be sustained and progressed."

Business leaders and politicians will examine the prospects for business under a Labour government at a conference held by the Adam Smith Institute. But before today's conference the BCC published 12 detailed policy briefs, covering key issues for business in the coming election, and urged the political parties to tailor their programmes to meet the needs of business.

They included calls for macroeconomic stability, investment in training and education, a "positive" role in Europe, retention of the social chapter opt-out and rejection of a minimum wage, maintenance of the UK's business support network and further progress on deregulation, especially on tax.

Siebe offers £46m for Whessoe

SIEBE, the engineering company, has revealed a £46 million agreed bid for Whessoe, the manufacturing group based in north-east England. The surprise bid values Whessoe at 155p a share, against a closing price of 90p on Tuesday.

A share alternative to the cash bid will offer 31 new Siebe shares for each 200 Whessoe.

Whessoe's fortunes have been rising since a subsidiary, Coggins Systems, won an order from the US defence department.

Whessoe shares closed 65p up, at 155p, Siebe shares fell 25p, to 96p. *Tempus, page 30*



Bob Ellis, left, chief executive of Visual Action Holdings, and Digby Davies, finance director, reported a 20 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £8.3 million for 1996. There is a final dividend of 2.9p, which makes a maiden total of 4.1p.

Earnings growth at highest for four years

By Philip Bassett, Industrial Editor

GROWTH in average earnings is running at its highest level for four years, government figures showed yesterday.

The rise, coupled with continuing big drops in the jobless figures, has increased fears of a rise in interest rates and prompted speculation about how far unemployment could continue to fall without stoking up inflation.

Although technically underlying average earnings growth remained unchanged in the year to December at 4.25 per cent, according to figures from the Office for National Statistics, the level was masked by an upward revision to the figure for November.

The overall earnings growth figure is now at its highest since February 1993.

Underlying growth of earnings in manufacturing industry rose for the first time in five months — also by a quarter point to 4.75 per cent, its highest level since May 1995.

Earnings in the production sector saw their second consecutive monthly rise — now up a full half-point in two months, also to 4.75 per cent, which is their highest level since July 1995.

But productivity is also rising fast, with output per head in manufacturing 1.5 per cent higher in the three months ending December compared with a similar period a year earlier. This is the largest rise since August 1994, and productivity is now at its highest level since August 1995.

City analysts saw the rise in average earnings as an increase in inflationary pressures.

Ronson ties up £200m Heron deal

GERALD RONSON, chief executive of the Heron property group, confirmed that he is on the comeback trail yesterday with a £200 million deal to develop a 500 acre site in South Wales (Sarah Cunningham writes).

It is the second big deal in recent weeks for Mr Ronson, who was jailed for six months

in 1990 for his part in the Guinness affair. In December Mr Ronson announced a £100 million property investment and development programme in Spain and the United Kingdom.

According to a Heron spokesman, the two deals are "the tip of the iceberg" and other large projects in the UK

and continental Europe are on their way. On the continent, the company is understood to be most keen on projects in France and Spain. Heron also has ambitions in the UK and was one of the groups interested in buying Canary Wharf in London.

In South Wales, Heron Land Developments, a subsid-

iary of Heron International, plans to develop 2,000 new homes and 2.5 million sq ft of industrial and commercial space on the site, which is near Chepstow.

The company believes the project could create up to 2,500 jobs over the next seven years. The scheme includes plans for a bypass for Chepstow.

DeLorean victory for Andersen

ARTHUR ANDERSEN, the accountancy firm, claimed another victory in the 12-year-old DeLorean case after a federal judge in the Southern District Court of New York ruled that the British Government would have to settle its claims in state court if it wanted to pursue the matter (Eric Regis writes).

The Department of Economic Development issued a writ against the accountancy firm in 1985. It alleged conspiracy, fraud, negligence and incompetence in auditing DeLorean Motors, the Belfast sports car manufacturer that collapsed in 1982, wiping out the Government's £15 million investment.

Arthur Andersen has always maintained that the Government's political goals took priority over the factory's commercial risks.

Hearing against mother delayed

By Caroline Megrell

COURTS, banker to the Queen, yesterday delayed bankruptcy proceedings against Rebecca Mills, a 41-year-old mother of three, after intervention by *The Times*.

The bank, which is reputed to have waived bank charges worth £500,000 on the Duchess of York's £4.3 million overdraft, had issued bankruptcy proceedings against Mrs Mills because of the actions of her husband, Sebastian, from whom she is now separated. Mrs Mills has never been a customer of Courts.

Seven years ago she signed over the house in which she now lives and another property to her husband as security for his business.

The company later collapsed with debts of £172,000.

Mr Mills is no longer in Britain. One of the properties has been repossessed by the Britannia Building Society.

The bankruptcy proceedings could have led to Mrs Mills losing the property in which she lives. That is estimated to be worth £70,000.

Mrs Mills, who receives income support, said: "There is already an outstanding debt to Barclays on this property so Courts would have very little to gain by bankrupting me."

After a report earlier this week in *The Times*, Courts has agreed to meet Mrs Mills to try to sort out the problems and has put off the bankruptcy hearing that was scheduled for today.

Courts is refusing to comment about Mrs Mills.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

C&W nets £40m in Swedish disposal

CABLE AND WIRELESS yesterday sold half of its stake in a Swedish telecommunications company for £46 million as it sheds peripheral investments before the launch of Cable and Wireless Communications. The sale of 5.5 per cent of NetCom Systems, which owns Tele2, Sweden's second-largest phone company, and Comviq, a mobile phone operation, resulted in a net gain of £40 million for C&W. The company retains a 4.6 per cent stake, but will probably sell it this year.

Stephen Pentt, director of C&W's European operations, said the sale was timed to take advantage of the strong recent performance of NetCom shares over which it has little control. It wants to divert its financial and management resources to the creation of Cable and Wireless Communications, the merger of Mercury Communications and the Nynex, Bell CableMedia and Videotron cable companies. CWC is to be floated on the Stock Exchange in the spring.

Rexam agrees US sale

REXAM, the UK materials and packaging group, has agreed to sell the assets and operations of Otis Specialty Papers, a US subsidiary, to Wausau Paper Mills for about £36 million. The disposal, and that of a smaller Indonesian business called PT Rexam Mulok to Bulpak, form part of a planned divestment programme, announced last year and intended to shed businesses with a combined annual turnover of £303 million. Otis had turnover of £54 million.

Coffee price rises

COFFEE prices reached a 15-month high yesterday but cocoa moved sharply lower. The International Coffee Organisation's daily coffee market indicator price jumped to \$1.221 a pound from \$1.190, the highest level since mid-November 1995. Coffee prices have now risen by 33.4 per cent since the start of the year. The International Cocoa Organisation's daily market indicator was \$1,349.64 a ton yesterday, down from \$1,364.65 and the lowest level since last March.

Telecoms pact progress

A GLOBAL pact to liberalise the \$600 billion telecoms trade is on track before Saturday's deadline, boosted by new offers from Canada and the European Union to open up markets further, negotiators said yesterday. The EU tabled a final and more liberal proposal and Canada offered to ease controls on its domestic satellite market, while more countries were expected to revise offers listing how far they are ready to open domestic markets to outside competition.

Record Holdings up

RECORD HOLDINGS, the manufacturer and distributor of metal and woodworking tools, increased pre-tax profits to £3.5 million from £2.95 million in 1996. Earnings were 6.4p a share (5.3p). The total dividend is lifted to 3.75p a share (3.6p), with a final 2.6p. The shares rose 6 1/2p to 66 1/2p. Trading conditions remained difficult and selling prices were hurt by the strength of sterling. Against this, profits benefited from further improvements in manufacturing efficiency.

Court victory for BA

BRITISH AIRWAYS won a decisive courtroom victory against John Gorman, who claims to have been fed broken glass by the airline during a flight and to have subsequently been the target of corporate bullying. Mr Gorman, who was seeking compensation, had his case thrown out of the Central London county court because he had failed to turn up for his original hearing last November and because of doubts over his medical evidence. Mr Gorman intends to appeal against the ruling.

ITT spurns Hilton bid

ITT has rejected Hilton Hotels' unsolicited \$6.5 billion takeover offer as inadequate and not in the best interests of shareholders. It said the \$55-a-share Hilton offer did not reflect the inherent value of ITT, which owns and operates Sheraton hotels and Caesars casinos in Nevada and New Jersey. On Tuesday, Hilton named 11 candidates for ITT's current board seats, and 14 others who could be added if ITT attempts to thwart its bid by boosting the number of board members.

PIA to shrink board

THE Personal Investment Authority, watchdog for firms that sell direct to the public, is to cut its board from 21 directors to 17 at its annual meeting, on July 8. Of the four leaving, Sir John Bailey and Sir Leonard Peach represent the "public interest" and Lawrence Churchill and Allan Daffern represent "practitioners". Joe Palmer, chairman, said that the reduction would bring the board down to a more manageable size while maintaining adequate practitioner and public-interest input.

Eagle Star expands

EAGLE STAR INSURANCE (Ireland), a subsidiary of BAT, is acquiring Irish National Insurance from New Ireland Holdings for £230 million. The acquisition will almost double Eagle Star's general insurance premium income in the Republic and will increase its market share to more than 10 per cent. The joint premium income of Eagle Star and Irish National was in excess of £1.14 billion in 1996. During that year Irish National earned pre-tax profits of £132 million.

Clyde remains hopeful

CLYDE PETROLEUM claims it still has a chance of defeating the £494 million takeover bid from Gulf Canada Resources despite the bidder buying more shares in the market yesterday to lift its stake 1.9 per cent to 29.7 per cent. Malcolm Gourlay, Clyde chairman, said PDM, which sold a 14 per cent stake on Tuesday, was always expected to sell. He said Norwich Union, Schroders and Capital Group, which together own about 36 per cent of Clyde, have yet to make up their minds.

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Film division in the black while overall profits fall

Polygram roused by Sleepers

By Alasdair Murray

BOX office hits that included *Train-spotting*, *Fargo* and *Sleepers* helped Polygram's film division to move into profit for the first time last year although weak music growth held back overall profits at the entertainment company.

The film division turned in a small profit in the second half, having full-year losses of 35 million guilders (£11 million). The company's best box office performer was *Sleepers*, which grossed \$106 million, while the British film *Train-spotting* took \$73 million worldwide. Fargo has been nominated for seven Oscars, including best film and best director. New films scheduled for release this year include *Bean*, with Rowan Atkinson, and *Gin-*

gerbread *Man*, directed by Robert Altman and starring Kenneth Branagh. Polygram — which is 75 per cent owned by Philips, the Dutch group — said profits fell 18 per cent after tax and extraordinary items to 608 million guilders. The company took a 114 million guilders charge for a restructuring of its music division that included moving the Motown record label from Los Angeles to New York.

Alain Levy, chief executive, blamed slower music industry growth and lower than expected sales from international pop stars for the decline. No Polygram artist sold more than five million albums last year, although *To the Faithful Departed* by The Cranberries sold 4.4 million copies and Bryan Adams's *18* still i-

die sold 3.9 million. The music division lifted sales by 5 per cent overall, selling a total of 34 million albums. But profits were hurt by a fall in margins as a result of retail pressures in the US and Europe.

New albums are scheduled for release this year by the Bee Gees, Elton John, U2, Pulp and Van Morrison.

Mr Levy said the music market in the US would remain difficult in the coming year and film operations would face heavy costs from the launch of the new US distribution operation. But he added that the company was optimistic that the benefits of its restructuring would feed through this year and that the company would return to long-term growth.

TOURIST RATES			
	Bank	Bank	Bank
	Buy	Sell	Buy
Australia \$	2.28	2.10	
Austria Sch	20.94	18.84	
Belgium Fr	52.7	58.41	
Canada \$	2.25	2.16	
Cypriot £	0.959	0.798	
Denmark Kr	11.58	10.26	
Finland Mk	5.95	5.01	
France Fr	9.98	9.04	
Germany Dr	2.29	2.20	
Greece Dr	447	421	
Hong Kong \$	13.91	12.31	
Indonesia Rp	160	100	
Ireland P	1.08	1.00	
Israel Sh	5.76	5.10	
Italy Lira	1,936	2,000	
Japan Yen	217.00	201.00	
Malta £	0.690	0.605	
Netherlands Gld	3.28	3.00	
New Zealand \$	2.34	2.32	
Norway Kr	11.37	10.57	
Poland Zloty	287.60	282.00	
Spain Ptas	165.50	229.50	
Sweden Kr	12.80	12.20	
Switzerland Fr	2.49	2.31	
Turkey Lira	200.00	198.00	
USA \$	1.78	1.65	

Tempus, page 30

□ Confusion behind the official numbers □ Hospital plan not all it seems □ An adman calls ...

Lies, and damned lies

□ THERE used to be a terribly useful little book called *How to Lie with Statistics*. This went through all the tricks whereby black could be proven to be white by the selective mangling of the relevant numbers.

There must be a few copies lying around at the Office for National Statistics. The numbers on jobs and earnings are increasingly haywire, yet they are supposed to be the dials monitored on the bridge as they steer the ship of state.

In reality, Kenneth Clarke has shown himself happy to ignore those dials if they conflict with his own views on base rates, even if they point firmly to red. But let us set aside the traditional political shoulder-charging that now surrounds the unemployment figures. There were some worrying aspects to yesterday's bundle of labour market data.

First, the number of jobless. There is actually an administrative count of the number of people who have got through the bureaucracy, which is designed to head off a fixed percentage on the way, and claimed benefits. That they count the unemployed is a mere by-product.

The introduction of the Jobseeker's Allowance to replace the old benefit will take time to play

through. No one, not even the Bank, let alone the squirming statisticians in Whitehall, can at this stage be sure of its effect.

What is clear, as the City realises, is that the jobless figures are even more hopelessly distorted than the politicians claim, and may remain so for months to come — to the annoyance of ministers, who want to proclaim a clear success on jobs in time for the election.

The distortion arrives thus. Of yesterday's 67,800 people who found jobs since the last monthly count, no one can say how many thousands had previously worked and claimed benefit and been forced out of the black economy by the JSA. As a measure of economic performance, the figure is meaningless.

A new government, of whatever political hue, should swiftly introduce a monthly version of the currently quarterly Labour Force Survey count as an alternative — and better — way of measuring jobs.

The rise in earnings yesterday

was also worrying, once you strip off the thin disguise in front of the figures. Increasingly, earnings increases are not charted month by month. The earnings figures remain unchanged, yet at the same time they increase.

How is this done? By revising the previous month's figure upwards, and then claiming that the latest month is in line with that revision. Result: higher earnings which never seem to rise. Pay increases at their highest level now for four years should really sound alarm bells for inflation and interest rates. Or not. It all depends how you choose to read the numbers.

PFI works — as a form of health fudge

□ USE of the Private Finance Initiative in the health sector will lead to the privatisation of the NHS. So says received wisdom from the left. Labour has made it very clear that it does not feel bound by commitments made by

PENNINGTON



the Tories to new hospitals built with PFI money.

For a long time that was only an empty threat. While builders have long been hacking through rural hills and hedges to build PFI motorways, the PFI hospitals have only just had their umbilical cords cut.

Tarmac won a contract to build a new hospital in south London this week. Others are close to birthing. Labour critics have been so quiet that they could be in the intensive care unit. Why are they no longer crying foul over such spending of what is public money?

The answer must be that

Labour has rightly reinterpreted the PFI as a weapon against, rather than a tool in, the Tories' free market aims. Under the PFI, private companies spend funds on public sector capital projects. The funds are later reimbursed plus a healthy interest payment.

Rather than leading to the wholesale introduction of private companies into the health service, the PFI only cements the state's role in the provision of health care. Instead of the Government reducing its financial exposure towards the NHS, the PFI increases it.

So the scheme is an elaborate form of long-term government borrowing via construction companies and their banks — but at higher interest rates. The PFI also creates more bureaucracy and longer waiting lists because the Government demands that health authorities explore the use of PFI money before they tap public funds.

The privatisation of the NHS is the logical though not the necessary conclusion to the To-

ries' reforms. Whether this will or should happen is highly questionable. But the PFI is not the answer. At best it is a fudge.

Millennium vision

□ A *CROSSED* line yesterday allowed us to eavesdrop on a call from London's adland to the Palace of Westminster. Poor sound quality rendered only one side of the conversation audible.

Michael! It's been too long. I agree, the red tears were not one of our best, but there is something about an Ulster accent that kind of wears you down, you know? Anyway, as they say in my game, the client loved it.

This Millennium is a vision thing. If you can look at a few acres of polluted land in Greenwich and see the future of Great Britain, you've got vision. Can I just run a few ideas past you? First, Greenwich. Not good, and we have the vox pops to prove it. This is south of the river, you

know? Not too far from where John was brought up, and does that sound like a winner to you? Michael, all you are going to get is a few local yokels wandering around with their thumbs in their mouths and their wallets closed. Sorry to sound so uptight, Michael, but I just got back from there, and the traffic makes the Strand look like Route 66.

Second, this dome. Great idea, but a bit Sixties, you know, a bit Bucky Fuller? And you want to fill it with the Best of British? Best of British what? British coal, maybe? Sorry, Michael, I forgot. This is going to define your Government. Or maybe the next one. Sorry, that was tactless too. Anyway, what is your greatest achievement? Deregulation, Michael. Under the Tories you can buy an aubergine at midnight. You can buy pecorino cheese on a Sunday afternoon.

Michael, Millennium Central is a great name for an upmarket foodstore. Close to the West End or Knightsbridge? Chefs are the new rock-and-roll, right? Maybe Terry Conran — I know, but people change their minds. I love you, Michael. Trust me.

That other thing. We have field-tested it, and Michael Howard is, marketing-wise, a totally non-viable proposition. Ciao.

LAL raises provision as profits soar 30%

By MARIANNE CURPHY, INSURANCE CORRESPONDENT

LLOYDS ABBEY LIFE, the bancassurance subsidiary of Lloyds TSB, has reported a 30 per cent increase in profits and has set aside extra cash to cover pensions mis-selling compensation.

The insurer said performance across all its divisions had improved, and pre-tax profits for the full year to December 31 were up from £422 million to £548 million. Figures for the previous year included a £35 million loss from the disposal of Trans Leben. LAL's German subsidiary.

The company has bolstered compensation provision for customers who might have been mis-sold personal pensions by almost £14 million, bringing the total provision to £98.6 million.

Yesterday's results will be the last separate declaration of results after the company became a wholly owned subsidiary of Lloyds TSB last

December. LAL said it expected to make £50 million cost savings over three years and reiterated its interest in a mutual life insurer with distribution through independent financial advisers. It refused to say whether it intended to bid for Scottish Amicable.

Pre-tax profits from life assurance in Abbey Life Assurance and Black Horse Financial Services rose 23 per cent to £327 million (£266 million), while sales of life, pensions and unit trusts were up 16 per cent.

Lloyds Bank Insurance Services profits were up 44 per cent on increased loan volumes and share of underwriters' profits, while Black Horse Agencies, the estate agent, returned to profitability with pre-tax profits of £4 million. Although house exchanges were up 19 per cent in 1995, they are still 44 per cent below the 1988 peak.

New unit trust business, which includes the sale of personal equity plans, was up 56 per cent to £505 million (£323 million), with regular and single premium sales showing smaller rises.

Stephen Maran, LAL chief executive, said the rise in profits reflected a continuing focus on customer needs and increased operational efficiencies. Shares in Lloyds TSB rose 6.2p to 498.5p. Analysts were upbeat about the figures, saying prospects for this year and next looked attractive.



Maran: customer focus

Times, page 30

Cadbury wraps up purchase

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

CADBURY SCHWEPPE'S, the confectionary and soft drinks company, yesterday moved to grab a bigger piece of the Middle Eastern chocolate market with the purchase of Bim Bim, the leading Egyptian confectionary company.

Cadbury said that, combined with Cadbury Egypt, its existing company in the region, it would ensure market leadership and place the company in a strong position to benefit from further growth.

The price paid for the family-owned company was not disclosed, although Bim Bim is expected to show sales up 7 per cent in 1996 to £32 million. The company had net tangible assets valued at £35 million at the end of 1995.

Bim Bim has a 26 per cent share of the Egyptian market and exports throughout the region, giving it a 13 per cent share of the total Middle Eastern and North African market.

Cadbury also announced yesterday that it intends to redeem all its series three to six preference shares at the original issue price of \$500,000. The total cost of redemption will be about £107 million and will be met from existing resources.

Ushers float expected to raise £40m

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

USHERS of Trowbridge, the regional brewer, is expected to raise about £40 million next month in a float predicted to value it at up to £130 million.

The company, which has 542 pubs, will use the money to reduce debt of £65 million and to invest in the business.

In a pathfinder prospectus out yesterday, Ushers said it would invest £6.7 million in its retail estate, and expected a rate of return to exceed the current target of 20 per cent.

Ushers said that it can double capacity for contract brewing at its Trowbridge site, for an estimated cost of £9 million. The company brews beers such as Miller Genuine Draft, as well as its own ales.

Ushers said that trading in the first three months of this year was running ahead of last year, with a significant rise in specialist contract brewing.

Venture capitalist backers will own 49 per cent of Ushers after flotation, and directors and staff 10 per cent. A final prospectus, with pricing, will be issued in early March.

Tom Vyner, deputy chairman of J Sainsbury, is to be a non-executive director of Ushers. He is soon to leave the store chain, with which he has spent most of his career.

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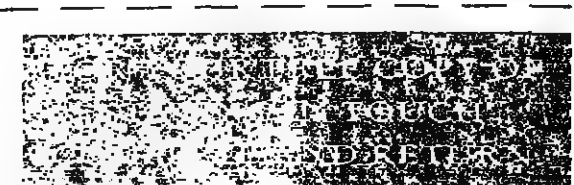
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LOY0023



STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

Investors worry as the pound's rise continues

CITY investors piled out of the big overseas earners worried by sterling's relentless rise against its main rivals and the impact it has on their profits.

Earlier this week, it soared to its highest level since withdrawing from the exchange-rate mechanism in October 1992 and that was the cue for investors to start switching out those companies exposed to currency fluctuations.

As a result, falls were seen in GKN, 15p at 96½p, T&N 7p at 149½p, British Aerospace 35½p at £11.90, Rolls-Royce 12½p at 220p, GEC 9p at 383½p, BAT Industries 10½p at 52½p, F&L 11½p at 180p, BBA Group 17p at 328p, Glynwed International 13p at 303p, Bowthorpe 13p at 305½p, Delta 10½p at 342p, and Morgan Crucible 11½p at 462½p.

There was support on defensive grounds. Whitbread was 16p better at 81½p after impressing brokers with encouraging comments about current trading. Other to rise included Scottish & Newcastle, 9½p at 60½p, Vaux Group, 4p at 280p, Century Inns, 7½p at 191p, Guinness, 4p at 439½p, and Matthew Clark, 3p at 289p. A revival in the drinks sector could not come at a better time for Ushers of Trowbridge, the regional brewer of which Roger North is chief executive, which yesterday published its pathfinder prospectus.

The rest of the equity market gave up an early 20-point lead undermined by the pound's performance and the Bank of England's inflation report. At one stage, the FTSE 100 index was down almost 11 points before rallying to close all-square at 4,304.3.

Late news of a bid approach left Whesoe sporting a rise of 65½p at 155½p. Siebe is making a recommended cash offer of 155p a share, putting a price tag of £42 million on the former heavy engineering group. Siebe fell 25p to 96½p.

Boots finished 9½p lower at 89p as one broker began urging clients to take profits after the shares rose to a five-year high earlier this week.

Cable and Wireless stood out with a rise of 12½p at 508½p as Merrill Lynch, the broker, raised its pre-tax profit forecast for 1997 from £1.27 billion to £1.3 billion. It has also set a target price for the shares of 600p. NatWest



Roger North, left, and Martin Coles, finance chief, of Ushers of Trowbridge, which has published its pathfinder prospectus

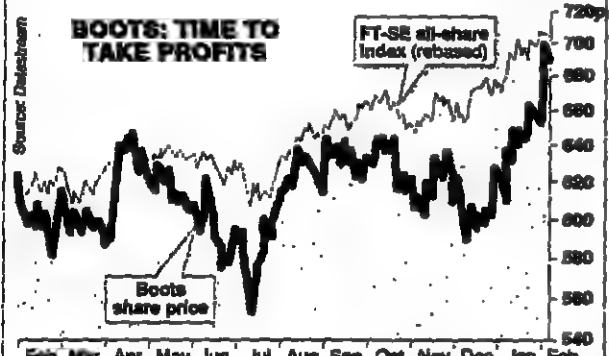
Securities has told clients to "add" to their holdings in BT, up 3p at 441½p, and Orange, 4p better at 214½p. Vodafone, down 6p at 279½p, is rated a "hold". Merrill Lynch is also keen on Storehouse, 4½p better at 302½p.

On the grey market, it was day of mixed fortunes for the two arms of British Gas. Shareholders in the company

was a mixed reaction by the water utilities to the report from Ofwat, the industry regulator, insisting they begin passing cost savings to customers by the year 2000. Anglian Water rose 8p to 62½p, and there were gains for Hyder, 2½p to 832½p, and Thames Water, 9p to 629p, but losses were seen in Severn Trent, 6p to 715p, and Wessex.

TC Group, subject of a merger last year between Takare and Court Cavendish, has begun to rise, with a rise of 2p to 110p. The shares tumbled from 140p after last month's profits warning and complaints about occupancy levels at its nursing homes. Speculators claim the group is now vulnerable to a bid.

yesterday gave the go-ahead for the proposed demerger. The EGM voted for the business to be split in two with shares in Centrica, the sales and retailing arm, and BG, the transportation and storage arm, trading officially on Monday. Centrica finished 5p better at 75½p, while BG was 4p lighter at 163½p. British Gas was steady at 239p. There



an AIM-listed newcomer, Interoute Telecommunications, 24½p down at 98½p. The group says that profits for the full year will fail to live up to expectations after equipment installed in Switzerland and France had to be replaced.

The group came to market in October at 150p with a price tag of £50 million, but came off after hitting a peak of 175½p. A report from Coopers & Lybrand, the accountant, claiming that football clubs were overvalued by up to £1 billion continued to cast a shadow over the sector. Worst hit yesterday was Manchester United, with its price losing 17½p at 675p, after briefly touching 672½p.

BTG stood out with a rise of 45p to 516p after being given approval by the Food and Drug Administration to market Benicof, its treatment for haemophilia in the US.

A bullish update on current trading lifted Hay & Robertson 3½p to 178½p. David Bailey, chairman, told shareholders the annual meeting that sales in the first 19 weeks of the current year were ahead of expectations.

The group has recently launched ranges of clothes produced under deals with Dunlop, Terry Venables, the former England manager, and Ruud Gullit, the Chelsea manager.

GILT-EDGED: The London bond market finished on a high note after a cautious start, with investors concerned by the latest drop in unemployment. Sentiment was also unshaken by the rise in average earnings and the revised figure for November.

So the apparent back down over interest rate rises by the Bank of England in its latest inflation report was positively received. This, combined with a rally by other European bond markets, enabled prices to end the session with useful gains.

In the futures pit, the March series of the Long Gilt rose 1½p to £113½ as the number of contracts completed reached 89,000.

In longs, Treasury 8 percent was 1½p better at £107½, while in shorts Treasury 8 percent 2000 was a tick firmer at £104½.

NEW YORK: Wall Street stocks extended their technical rally at midday. The Dow Jones industrial average ran up 48.49 points to hit 6,906.60.

MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):
Dow Jones 6906.60 (+48.49)
S&P Composite 796.26 (+4.68)

Tokyo:
Nikkei Average 18409.96 (+228.78)

Hong Kong:
Hang Seng 13962.61 (+4.00)

Amsterdam:
EEX Index 205.58 (+0.30)

Sydney:
All Ordinaries 2673.53 (+25.4)

Frankfurt:
DAX 3216.14 (+27.58)

Singapore:
Straits Times 2226.24 (+27.29)

Brussels:
General 11612.41 (+60.73)

Paris:
CAC-40 2394.37 (+7.24)

Zurich:
SIX 936.10 (+4.70)

London:
FT 100 4304.3 (+20.0)

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TEMPUS

Pounding for exporters

NOT ONLY mortgage payers shudder at talk of higher interest rates. The stock market was looking sorry for itself after the Bank of England's inflation report hit the screens because shares in our leading exporters plunged. It did not take share traders long to work out that if interest rates rise the pound will be supported at its present rather high levels or will rise further, making life even more difficult for our export earners. It has to be remembered that 40 per cent of corporate profits currently come from overseas.

So far chemicals, textiles and metals have been the worst-hit sectors. If only because food, drink and tobacco companies enjoy strong domestic demand. Profit forecasts for next year's trading at British Steel, for instance, have halved, purely because of the pound's impact. Given the damage that

currency volatility causes to corporate finances and the havoc it plays with long-term planning, one can at least sympathise with the plea by the Unilever chairman earlier this week for Britain to join EMU.

Currency movements matter to a trading giant like Unilever, which operates in most countries of the world and has to present its final results in both Dutch and English currency. Life would be simpler and more predictable at Unilever House if the whole of Europe could be accounted for in one currency. But even if Britain signed up for the euro, life would still not be ideal. Companies like Unilever and British Steel would still need to buy raw materials in dollars. Commodity markets told a tale yesterday of problems caused by the rising dollar, blamed for a drop in gold and a surge in coffee.

AIM

FOR AN exchange that seems to have the reputation as a playground of corporate crooks, blue sky wannabes and spivvy stocks in general, the Alternative Investment Market is producing growth.

Speculative stocks, AIM's speciality, are having something of a bull run in the junior exchange and investors who dismissed the exchange as a swindlers' paradise are only wailing.

The growth in the index is being led by Chelsea Village, Ramco Energy and Trocadero, the exchange's weightiest stocks. The stream of capital which has been flooding into AIM over the past two months is also being targeted at small companies in general.

Only a handful of AIM's constituents have any serious exposure to overseas

sales, and are thus insulated from damage caused by the strength of sterling.

But for every AIM wonderstock, there is still a problem stock going nowhere. This still scares the institutions that judge AIM stocks by standards applied to the main list.

With 256 companies and a capitalisation approaching

£6 billion, AIM cannot be written off as a showpiece of financial lunacy. True, it is a risky market, but at present it is delivering growth unmatched by any other sector.

Its biggest defect is still illiquidity. Until institutions start to play ball, the jagged edges which plot the share price of AIM companies will not be smoothed.

Polygram

THE history of the British film industry would hardly make the kind of "feel-good" movie beloved of Hollywood moguls. For all the native talent, the financial expertise to compete with the American giants has rarely been forthcoming, and the industry has been reduced to scrambling around for backers.

Film is a difficult business to get right, and the industry is littered with examples of companies that have gone belly-up after the box-office flop of an expensive turkey. Success requires a degree of luck, as well as deep pockets able to handle the ever-spilling costs.

Polygram, British based but Dutch controlled, is determined to try to tack a happy ending on to the script. It has sidestepped the traditional pitfalls of British film-makers — critically lauded but commercially disastrous — by also investing in European and American ventures.

Lloyds Abbey

ALTHOUGH personal equity plans and unit trusts may be selling well and bolstering profits, news that Lloyds Abbey Life has set aside a further £14 million provision for pensions misleadingly indicates that the life industry has still to shed the legacy of the 1980s.

Nevertheless, after several years of recession, sales of saving products are bouncing back, particularly those which do not require 25-year

contracts and can be bought and sold at will.

LAL's 30 per cent rise in profits yesterday was due to several factors: increased unit trust sales, a buoyant housing market, the lack of a £35 million write-off for the disposal of Transocean, and the fruits of co-opting at Black Horse, Lloyds Bowmakers, and Lloyds Bank Insurance Services.

Integration with Lloyds TSB is likely to yield further cost savings, but with so many brands within the LAL subsidiary, the bank needs to make some tough decisions.

It would like an IFA company, but is clearly concerned that the bidding frenzy for Scottish Amicable will push up prices. At least one brand needs to go from its rambling portfolio. Most obvious is Abbey Life, which LAL says will remain at present. Market fashion favours IFA operations, rather than direct sales operations, and LAL may struggle to find a buyer to take Abbey Life off its hands.

AIMING HIGHER

FT ALL SHARE INDEX (rebased)

FT AIM INDEX

Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb

1200

1100

1000

900

800

700

600

500

400

300

200

100

0

-100

-200

-300

-400

-500

-600

-700

-800

-900

-1000

-1100

-1200

-1300

-1400

-1500

-1600

-1700

-1800

-1900

-2000

-2100

-2200

-2300

-2400

-2500

-2600

-2700

-2800

-2900

-3000

-3100

-3200

-3300

-3400

-3500

-3600

-3700

-3800

-3900

-4000

-4100

-4200

COMMODITIES

ICE-LOK (London Midland)
CRUDE OILS (\$/bbl) FOB

Mar 21.18 -0.10
Apr 21.10 -0.05
May 21.05 -0.05
Jun 20.95 -0.05
Jul 20.85 -0.05
Aug 20.75 -0.05
Sep 20.65 -0.05
Oct 20.55 -0.05
Nov 20.45 -0.05
Dec 20.35 -0.05
Jan 20.25 -0.05
Feb 20.15 -0.05

ROBUSTA COFFEE (\$/lb)
Mar 170.00
Apr 170.00
May 170.00
Jun 170.00
Jul 170.00
Aug 170.00
Sep 170.00
Oct 170.00
Nov 170.00
Dec 170.00
Jan 170.00
Feb 170.00

WHITE SUGAR (\$/cwt)
Mar 17.00
Apr 17.00
May 17.00
Jun 17.00
Jul 17.00
Aug 17.00
Sep 17.00
Oct 17.00
Nov 17.00
Dec 17.00
Jan 17.00
Feb 17.00

MEAT & LIVESTOCK COMMISSION
Average live weight of pig at 100kg

Mar 17.00
Apr 17.00
May 17.00
Jun 17.00
Jul 17.00
Aug 17.00
Sep 17.00
Oct 17.00
Nov 17.00
Dec 17.00
Jan 17.00
Feb 17.00

OFFICIAL (at 100kg) price of pig
Mar 17.00
Apr 17.00
May 17.00
Jun 17.00
Jul 17.00
Aug 17.00
Sep 17.00
Oct 17.00
Nov 17.00
Dec 17.00
Jan 17.00
Feb 17.00

OFFICIAL (at 100kg) price of pig
Mar 17.00
Apr 17.00
May 17.00
Jun 17.00
Jul 17.00
Aug 17.00
Sep 17.00
Oct 17.00
Nov 17.00
Dec 17.00
Jan 17.00
Feb 17.00

OFFICIAL (at 100kg) price of pig
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OFFICIAL (at 100kg) price of pig
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OFFICIAL (at 100kg) price of pig
Mar 17.00
Apr 17.00
May 17.00
Jun 17.00
Jul 17.00
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Feb 17.00

OFFICIAL (at 100kg) price of pig
Mar 17.00
Apr 17.00
May 17.00
Jun 17.00
Jul 17.00
Aug 17.00
Sep 17.00
Oct 17.00
Nov 17.00
Dec 17.00
Jan 17.00
Feb 17.00

OFFICIAL (at 100kg) price of pig
Mar 17.00
Apr 17.00
May 17.00
Jun 17.00
Jul 17.00
Aug 17.00
Sep 17.00
Oct

MPUS
for exporters

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Loves Labour, lost position

ANIL BHOYRUL, editor of *Sunday Business*, is taking legal action against the weekly publication for unfair dismissal. After three months in the hot seat, he claims that he was fired because of political differences.

Bhoyrul, who co-founded the newspaper alongside Tom Ruythoff, almost three years ago, has written many a leader attacking the Referendum Party. Luke Johnson, the paper's recently appointed chairman, is a Referendum candidate. "Writing a leader in praise of the Labour Party can't have helped my career," says Bhoyrul, who tells me he's joining the queue at the jobcentre. David Devoto, chief executive, refused to comment.

Out of spotlight

LIFE at the head of an international audio-visual equipment hire company ought to be glamorous. Travelling across the globe, supplying film equipment for the Olympics, high-calibre conferences, and movies such as *Evita* certainly sounds glamorous. Even this week, Bob Ellis, chief executive of Visual Action Holdings, was spotted at the Variety Club Show-business Awards, for which he generously provided the services of his company completely free. At last year's Oscars, however, Ellis avoided the Hollywood spotlight. He nervously watched the events from the comfort of his home instead. "I stayed up all night, but my wife insisted on going to bed," he says.



Taxing belief

MALCOLM BRUCE is preparing to cross swords with the Inland Revenue. The Treasury spokesman for the Liberal Democrats is taking up the case of a woman being charged 69p for three days' interest after she paid the Inland Revenue through her bank. Bruce says: "Only this Government is capable of spending £32.50 to save a few pence. A little human common sense could save a great deal of money and time. I intend to raise this matter with Treasury ministers at the earliest opportunity."

A DOUBLE BLUNDER by the Inland Revenue. This week it was forced to fax a correction after citing the wrong address for its new inquiry room at South West Wing, Bush House. Too bad then that the Revenue's second fax, spelling out the correct address, was written on notepaper headed North West Wing, Bush House.

Polished off

HOW not to look after a top UK-rated oil analyst. On a trip to visit Anadarko in Houston last week, Warburg's wunderkind Rob Arnott was shown to his hotel room. Try as he might he couldn't find a bed. The response from reception? "Is that a problem, sir?" Worse still, there were no international telephones or hot water. When Arnott put in a call to have his shoes cleaned, as you do, the reply hardly surprised him: "The shoe cleaner died last week, sir."

MORAG PRESTON

George Simpson took over as managing director of the General Electric Company from Lord Weinstock, its modern creator, five months ago. Since then GEC has sold three companies for more than £100 million. More are expected to follow, doubtless demonstrating that Mr Simpson is just as tough-minded, profit-conscious and unsentimental as the legendary figure who sat in his seat so long. Allied to GEC's £2 billion of cash resources, they could be the prelude to vast strategic deals to unify Britain's electronics and defence industry — or cede more of it to French control. Exciting times ahead, perhaps.

Pending such earth-shattering moves, however, the wider public image of Mr Simpson's GEC may well be set by a deal with rather fewer noughts on the end, financially trivial in terms of this £10.7 billion multinational enterprise. GEC-Marconi, the electronics company at the centre of its operations, has arranged to flog in 1,000 lots at Christie's the company archive, built by Guglielmo Marconi, founder of his eponymous company as well as much of the radio, telegraph and broadcasting industries. Only the best items will be retained for their marketing value.

The collection, which took five months to catalogue, covers anything from laboratory experiments to business letters from 1896 to the 1930s. It may fetch £1 million, though high prices for Marconigraphs from the Titanic at a previous Christie's sale could boost the total. GEC has 3,000 of them.

Correspondents to *The Times*, including

A century after radio, Marconi could soon reinvent museums

the late Signor Marconi's daughter Elettra, have not, on the whole, been amused at such "irresponsible" behaviour towards "a national asset". The planned disposal is not, as harsher critics suggest, "for the sake of a little filthy lucre". In his response, Sir Geoffrey Pattie, the former minister who chairs GEC-Marconi, carefully links the proceeds with the making of a CD-Rom interactive disk of the Marconi story, "a high-tech solution of which Marconi would surely have approved", and a politically modish scheme to enthuse secondary school teachers over electronics. Documents will be copied and key radio experiments carefully reproduced for future scholars.

The archive is really being sold to dispose of a corporate embarrassment. This asset was so obscurely hidden that few outside the industry and its academics seemed to know about it. A study in 1995, before the company's disappointingly low-key centenary, found that the asset was a hidden liability. Purpose-built facilities to preserve the deteriorating collection could cost a whopping £11 million, consultants claim.

Sir Geoffrey explains that this would be "far more than the value of the archive".



This begs some questions. Would preserving it not cost others just as much? Should the masses of paper therefore be left to rot? Is market value the only value?

GEC has evolved a market solution. If the collection is dispersed, individual antiquaries would be willing to spend the more modest sums needed to preserve the value of what they had bought with good money. In applying the virtues of commercial logic, as well as the restrictions of commercial values, GEC invites a debate among companies and institutions, from the largest

to the smallest, all over the country. Every church, school or parish archivist knows that heritage can be an embarrassment, beyond the crown jewels that everyone is interested in. There is a conflict between keeping things secure in the right conditions and the cost, let alone access for people to see them. Lucky are those who can use secure storage maintained at taxpayers' expense. Even then, someone has to choose which items are to be kept in such luxury. Doubtless, many will set their hopes on the overdrawn well of lottery money.

For big companies and most others, however, no such easy answer is available. There is no case for taxpayers to look after the papers of great companies, just to save shareholders the cost. They are responsible for their own heritage, like any other community, and should be held accountable for it. In the vogue competitive model of business, however, companies do not last for ever and cannot bear irrelevant overheads. Much of our industrial history has been lost in takeovers. More will be. Aside from selling ephemera to collectors, a sensible solution might be for companies to endow their archives when times are good and to

contract out their care to properly financed commercial museum companies.

Before that can happen, a properly commercial archive industry would have to develop. Museums conform to the immutable Law of Morally Superior Bodies. Worthies believe their own higher purposes absolve them from standards they impose on ordinary folk. Newspapers are secretive, police cars habitually break speed limits, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds kills birds — and, as lenders such as GEC-Marconi have discovered, many museums lose treasures or stuff them in the attic for the rats. This will continue so long as they are above commercial disciplines and can blame slackness on lack of funds.

In our cash-measured age, museums undervalue free gifts just as much as those allowed to view them free undervalue the experience. If big companies apply their business acumen to their own archive problems, they may help to revolutionise museums and to give more hope for our less immediately glamorous heritage. Ideally, museums should contract with companies, donors and trusts for a fee to store and display treasures to legally enforceable standards. To help the transition, perhaps the Government should set up Ofmuse to vet and certify those authorised to hold the nation's archives.

This debate may do nothing for Mr Simpson's reputation as a corporate citizen. But it could offer great business opportunities for a new ethically conscious generation of venturers.

Union recognition proposal strikes fear into businesses

Labour must tread carefully with plans to protect workers, says Philip Bassett

Never mind the social chapter and the minimum wage. Good argument for politicians, but they won't matter in practice to most of us. What we're concerned about is Labour bringing back the unions by bringing in a new law to give unions legal recognition. That's what worries us about Mr Blair.

Those are the words of the head of a medium-sized engineering company. Another view from a Midlands firm is: "We're not against unions. We're unionised, and that suits us. But we don't want those arrangements changed by a new law."

Signing up for the European social chapter and introducing a national minimum wage are two key aspects of Labour's economic policies that are attracting a great deal of business and political heat.

But behind them is a proposal which has drawn less scrutiny from the public, but is probably of greater interest to many companies: Labour's commitment to bring in new legal provisions to give trade unions a right to be recognised for collective bargaining if a majority of employees so desire.

The unions will tomorrow open their own pre-election campaign when they urge the UK's eight million union members to vote for the political party which offers most rights for employees. At the same time, Stephen Byers, the Shadow Employment Minister, will set out Labour's commitment to new employment rights in a speech to the Adam Smith Institute.

A minimum wage and the social chapter are key components of Labour's plans to set new minimum standards at work if it wins the election. Equally important is a commitment from Tony Blair to introduce two other rights: a right to representation, so that workers can use outsiders to help in talks with their employer; and a right for a union to be recognised if a majority — more than 50 per cent — of employees want it.

Many companies in the UK will be wholly unaffected by the minimum wage and the social chapter.

Their pay levels and conditions are already above the minimums that would be applied. But many would, at least potentially, be affected by a legal right to recognition. Less than 40 per cent of all workplaces in Britain now recognise trade unions, and many



History lesson: violence at the Grunwick picket line remains a vivid memory

well-known companies are non-union, such as Marks & Spencer, McDonald's, IBM and Honda.

For many companies, the prospect of legally enforced unionisation is barely a reality. In service industries, for instance, where the proportion of the workforce who are union members is low — such as retailing and catering — current levels of unionisation and high labour turnover mean that the possibility of a majority of employees voting for a union is highly remote.

But in other areas, such as engineering or printing, the prospect of a legal reintroduction of unions is real. Behind the scenes, a number of large companies have been lobbying Labour leaders to try to ease back their plans. "The newspaper industry will be a key

battleground," acknowledges one employers' leader.

Some employers are already going further. Singapore Airlines, for instance, has recently transferred all its UK pilots — with their agreement and as part of an overall package — to employment contracts under local Singapore law so they are no longer covered by UK job legislation.

Labour leaders have been quietly taking soundings on their recognition plans with unions, the TUC and with employers. Relations between Mr Blair's new Labour and the unions have at times been tempestuous, and the party leader has made it clear that he will, if in government, grant the unions no favours. Labour is committed to union

recognition because it believes that it will benefit employees, not because it sees it as the party's job to help unions to do what they have failed to do themselves — win new members and new recognition deals.

Key union leaders, like John Monks, the TUC General Secretary who launches the TUC's campaign tomorrow, accept that unions have to prove their worth. They recognise that the best means of averting employer opposition to unions is to demonstrate how unions can help businesses.

The AEEU engineering union, for instance, is doing just that by sending glossy promotional packages to a range of potential inward-investor companies. The packages include warm endorse-

ments from the likes of Toyota, BA, Electrolux, Nissan, Bosch, Sharp and Vauxhall.

Labour has learnt some hard lessons from its own past, from the days in the last Labour Government of the 1970s, when statutory union recognition was in force.

Grunwick, a north London photoprocessing plant that refused to grant union recognition and became the scene of heavy and often violent picketing, showed that the provisions were largely unworkable — and research since then has shown that they generated few new union members in any case.

Labour will be content if employees don't want unions because they are already satisfied with their job conditions. For example, Labour leaders privately do not expect Marks & Spencer employees to want union recognition. But the party believes that intimidation of employees remains rife at many companies, and union recognition will help.

Labour leaders are aware of the minefield of potential difficulties posed by the recognition commitment, such as how to define the bargaining unit covered by the majority vote provision.

There is also the question of whether to put one or more unions on any ballot, and if only one, who should act to choose which one needs to be addressed. How to enforce the law and how to act if an employer refuses to accept a legal ruling is also important.

If Labour does win the election, Whitehall officials, well versed in such arguments, will have carefully considered proposals waiting on ministers' desks, setting out detailed plans on how to put into practice the pledge on recognition. Labour is already working on the details of its own proposals.

Pol evidence shows that, on many issues, business looks upon new Labour more favourably than it has looked upon the Labour Party in the past. Despite the sound and fury that they generate, business leaders acknowledge privately that a minimum wage and the social chapter will be marginal questions for many companies.

However, union recognition is deeper and more central to many companies. Business is bracing itself, if not for an open fight over the issue, then for having to come to terms with a move that is of growing concern.

DTI's Sector Challenge inclined towards competitive disadvantage

From the Deputy Chairman of the British Knitting and Clothing Export Council Sir, Does the Government understand or even want to understand how business really works? Do they want to make business more efficient? Do they want to increase exports? If so, the latest baffling scheme from the DTI is an absolute gem.

For many years the DTI has made a contribution towards the expenses of new exporters (mainly small to medium-sized companies) who attend overseas trade fairs. This contribution has always been modest, costing only £17 million for the current year, and has had the benefit of being simple to administer and highly effective. In the case of my own industry, exports of £3 billion were achieved in 1996 so there can be little doubt that the Government's money has been well spent on us (less than £1.5 million to take 1,000 new exporters to around 50 overseas trade fairs).

All this is now being put at risk because, according to Anthony Nelson, the Trade Minister, this Trade Fair

Support Scheme (TFSS) will be replaced by a Byzantine scheme called "Sector Challenge". What this means is that each trade association wishing to provide support to their exporting members through overseas trade shows will have to compete for funds from the DTI by putting forward individual proposals. Not only does this absorb huge amounts of time from the already overworked staff of trade associations but it also involves huge amounts of time on the part of civil servants who have to assess them.

If this is what the Government means by competition then all of us who actually do the work will have to reassess what we understand by competitive advantage because in this instance it clearly is competitive disadvantage. If responsible trade associations can no longer rely on DTI support, then this essential component of Britain's export effort will soon wither.

Yours faithfully,

TONY LANGFORD,

John Smedley Limited,

Lea Mills,

Matlock, Derbyshire.

Genetic tests pose confidentiality dilemma

From Dr C. Gardner-Thorpe Sir, You report (Insurers demand genetic results, February 5) that the Association of British Insurers has ruled out mandatory genetic tests for all.

Nevertheless, those who have already taken genetic tests may have to declare the results when applying for a new policy.

On the one hand, mandatory tests (which have been debated previously in these columns) would force (actively or by inference) unwelcome genetic knowledge on some persons, and consequently their families.

On the other hand, information already available to the policy applicant but not disclosed to the insurer

would confer an unfair and significant disadvantage on the insurer. Disclosure of this sort of information would seem appropriate, therefore.

However, there is a real risk here that confidential information about an applicant at risk could be used inappropriately in relation to applications from other members of his family. Once confidentiality is broken, it cannot be restored and information of this sort needs to be treated with utmost secrecy.

Yours faithfully,

CHRISTOPHER GARDNER-THORPE,

The Coach House,

La College Road,

Exeter, Devon.

Requiescat Griffin

From Mr and Mrs John Hart Sir, I read (January 16) with dismay — and my wife with grief — that Midland Bank's new owners from China or somewhere intend to kill off Griffin.

Are they mad? Poor Griffin, so simpatico. We have one, sold to my wife at our branch long ago where the staff proudly produced him and others like him for charity. He now wears

socks. In time he will be valuable, probably more than the bank.

Is there no whimsy left in the counting-house of the Orient, to which even our high street banks are in hock? A number of accounts may well be closed because of this jejune outlook. After all, there is another high street bank with rather a nice horse for an emblem.

Yours in sorrow,

JOHN AND IRENE HART,

11 Mountview, NW7.

Deadline nears for NatWest/The Times business ethics competition

A search for more than tunnel vision



Protesters like Swampy present a problem that has to be overcome

Time is running out for students who want to advise the managing director of Go-Build how to turn his company around and avoid job cuts. The closing date for entries for this year's Business Ethics Competition, sponsored by the NatWest Group and *The Times*, is February 28.

A moral dilemma relating to the contract to build a motorway, as tunnelling environmental activists try to thwart its construction, has been posed and undergraduates studying for a first degree are asked to put themselves in the place of the industry's decision makers and to produce solutions to the ethical problems.

Entry forms containing the full details of the problem posed can be obtained from NatWest branches or from Anthony Fisher, NatWest/The Times Business Ethics Competition, Room 217, 41 Lothbury, London EC2P 2BP.

The competition is aimed at raising the level of the business ethics debate and to relate real-life problems to academic studies. The judges are led by Derek Wanless, chief executive of NatWest. Other members are John Drummond, the managing director of Integrity Works, a business ethics consultancy, John Monks, the general secretary of the Trades Union Congress, Julia Neuberger, chairman of Camden and Islington Community Health Services NHS Trust, and Lindsay Cook, business editor of *The Times*.

The first prize is £3,000, with a matching cheque for the winner's college. Second prize is £2,000 and third prize £1,000 to both student and college.

Entrants have to write an essay detailing how to deal with the problem facing Go-Build, which may go bust if it does not proceed with the contract,

which is likely to meet much opposition. The writers of the best six essays will be invited to meet the judges to discuss their essays, to respond to a development in the dilemma and to join in a group discussion led by Mr Drummond.

Last year's competition featured the problem of a supermarket chain that wanted to relocate from an unprofitable suburban store to a much larger city centre building despite local opposition. Chris Ayres, who was studying at Hull University, just made the final six, but when he arrived to debate the further developments he quickly showed his grasp of local politics, problem solving and ethics. He suggested that the store should be kept open for a further two months in which time the supermarket chain would find a bus company willing to transport its former customers to the new site.

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ACCOUNTANCY

Treasury targets tax avoidance after VAT's missing billions

Richard Watson looks at how the Budget will shift the ground rules

How much are VAT advisers worth? This has always been a difficult question for the profession and its clients to answer. Fortunately, we can all stop worrying about it because the National Audit Office has told us — £2 billion. That is its estimate of the amount that the profession saved its clients — and hence cost in revenue — in 1995-96.

VAT hit the headlines last year when it was realised that some £5 billion of the tax had gone astray between the Treasury's estimate and Customs and Excise's bank account. One suspects that the first reaction of the Treasury was to blame Customs for not collecting the tax properly, while the first reaction of Customs was to blame the Treasury for getting its estimates wrong. In a compromise, they said revised estimates showed only £1 billion of revenue was missing. The Chancellor thought this was serious enough, and told them to do something about it.

In true Civil Service fashion, the result was a committee. Its report is of course secret, but the National Audit Office has given us the gist.

There is a statistical relationship between the yield of VAT and the underlying pattern of



Richard Watson says even VAT planning has its limitations

consumer expenditure. VAT is a tax on consumer expenditure and one might therefore expect its receipts to match expenditure changes quite closely. The problem is that only about 60 per cent of consumer expenditure is subject to VAT. The rest is either zero-rated or exempt.

Because of this variation in the tax burden on different types of expenditure, it has long been known that VAT revenues have a different relationship to consumer expenditure at different points in the economic cycle. When money is scarce, people spend less on luxuries and proportionately more on necessities, which are exactly the things that tend to be zero-rated. The Treasury statisticians therefore expect that, as the economy goes into recession, the VAT revenues from a given level of consumer expenditure will decline, but the normal relationship will resume when the economy comes out of recession. This is what did not happen last year.

Of the £5 billion original revenue loss, the committee has decided that £2 billion is due to improved effectiveness in tax avoidance. It produced no evidence for this figure and until it does, it must be questionable as to whether it is even in the right

from a range of tax regime changes... and from successful legal challenges to the department's interpretation of VAT law". This means that Customs has lost more cases in the courts and taxpayers have taken advantage of their ability to recover tax in comparable situations.

The Chancellor has now taken action to limit this effect by restricting claims for back-tax to three years and imposing more stringent requirements on their nature. In future, where tax has been passed on, Customs will claim unjust enrichment. It will then be for the claimant to prove the amount of his loss.

One thing is now clear. Customs, supported strongly by Treasury ministers, intends to deal once and for all with the problem of tax avoidance. This Budget has seen a wide range of weapons deployed against avoidance. Not long ago, the talk was of acceptable and unacceptable avoidance. It is no longer clear whether any avoidance is acceptable, and the tenets of the Duke of Westminster's case, which recognised the importance for the taxpayer of being able to arrange his affairs in such a way as to minimise the amount of tax payable now seem to be well and truly in their coffin.

Richard Watson is Head of Indirect Taxation at Price Waterhouse.

History offers hope on radical proposals

IT IS always disconcerting to find that, having commissioned an independent report into your organisation's workings, it doesn't come up with the findings you expected. Take the Gerrard Report on the English ICA.

Spot of bother at the old place, disastrous climbdown over failed merger with another accountancy body, small membership rebellion over perception of power being concentrated at the centre, members worried about lack of communication, all these issues triggered the obvious reaction. In an ostensibly democratic body there is only one consequence of a period of perceived uncertainty: a call, in the largest capital letters possible, for strong leadership. Dozens will call for it. But they will all want their own brand of strong leadership.

This is then followed, inevitably, by a call for a director-general. If only there was one person to provide the leadership, appear nightly on the TV news saying what good people chartered accountants are, sort out the subscriptions, then all would be well again. But supporters of director-generals only want their own views trumpeted. Someone else's views are definitely not strong leadership. The English ICA has periods when it vanishes into this black hole of squabbling among its more vociferous members. And the traditional answer is to have a constitutional review conducted by someone known for his independence. In 1983 it was genial Bob Tricker. He invented the idea of facilities and horrified the institute with the concept. Yet, now facilities are seen as one of its great successes. This time it was Peter Gerrard, the past senior partner of Lovell White Durrant, the City law firm, who conducted the review. And again the members and secretariat of the institute are up in arms at the review's conclusions. Hiring a lawyer for the job is reckoned to have been taking the idea of independence of view too far.

Partly they have a point. There is more than a hint of old-style lawyer culture in Gerrard's obvious dislike of boards representing members in business and industry. Once upon a time a chap who left practice for the vulgar world of commerce was considered to be in self-imposed outer darkness — no need for boards to look after the fellow's interest. But the point which has animated the institute the most is that Gerrard says the rank and file membership is talking nonsense and that the policies which were caus-

ing the membership unrest in the first place should be intensified rather than reversed.

This is the vexed question of concentration of power. The membership revolt that overturned education proposals was motivated by the idea that the institute's executive had grabbed too much power and was still doing so. Grassroots activists saw this growing centralisation as a challenge to the theoretically democratic roots of a professional institute. Gerrard was to be their saviour.

But instead he has advocated the opposite. "I have taken note of the view," Gerrard says in his review, "that what the institute needs is not more central authority, but less." The institute's critics would agree. But they would then go on to strip the executive of its powers and provide the levers for greater membership control through strengthening the grassroots district societies. Instead, Gerrard continues: "I believe that that concern arises, at least in part, from the prevailing uncertainty about where power lies, the assumption being, (on the part of those who hold this view) that it is somewhere in the centre and that centrality and lack of accountability go together."

Having reached that conclusion, he produces the opposite solution to that expected by institute members. "My proposed restructuring aims to meet that concern by removing the uncertainty." And how do you remove the uncertainty? You make it ever more obvious that the executive is in charge — not the members. "Central control does not mean that there cannot be a diversity of expressed opinions. What it does is to provide a safeguard against the left hand appearing not to know what

the right hand is doing." Then he suggests axing a third of the council and removing central funding from the district societies. You can see why the sort of members whose uproar provoked the review may be more than upset at its conclusions. The view of one agitated member who followed his comment of "why did we commission it?" at last week's council meeting with an even more heartfelt "we've got the wrong report" is probably being echoed around the country.

They should take heart from history. The debate over the report will be lengthy and involve many a working party. A gradualist approach will be taken. And before long the radical proposals of yesteryear will become the commonsense of the present.



ROBERT BRUCE

Masters of reform

IT SEEMED no coincidence that a vice-president promising radical and reforming times was elected at the same English ICA council meeting which last week discussed the Gerrard Report. This also advocates radical and reforming ideas, so many of the council would like it quietly buried. In particular they would like to see the back of

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

the suggestion that the number of council members should be reduced by about 30. The new vice-president, Sheila Masters, of KPMG, favours such ideas.

And worried members have noted that the number of members voting against her totalled 31. No difficulty in working out who is going to lose their seats then.

Naval gazing

CHRIS SWINSON, BDO Stoy Hayward partner and architect of the profession's new review board plans, is a nautical historian in his spare time. His heart of hearts is of oak rather than double entry. And he has often said his finest achievement is to have been part of the

team organising the restoration of HMS Victory. So it is good to see him installed as a trustee of the body intended to protect and preserve the Royal Naval College at Greenwich.

Head count

COMMENTS made last week by Mike Rake, the chief operating officer at KPMG, sent part-

ners in other firms scurrying for pencils and the backs of envelopes. He had suggested that 75 new people a week were joining the London office. "Surely not," says our man in the back bar of the Old Dr Butler's Head. "That would mean almost 4,000 in the year. Very hard to sustain." And then he thought again. "Unless there are 75 leaving every week as well." Surely not.

ROBERT BRUCE

AN EXCLUSIVE COMPETITION

THE TIMES

Do you want to make a movie?

Today *The Times* gives you the chance of a lifetime — to make a movie. In an exciting cross-media competition, in association with Faber and Faber, Dillons The Bookstore, Sky Movies and *Esquire* magazine, and in association with Arri (GB) Ltd, you can win an Arriflex camera worth £56,000. Arriflex cameras are the most widely used to make motion pictures and our prize is similar to the camera cult director Robert Rodriguez used to make *El Mariachi*.

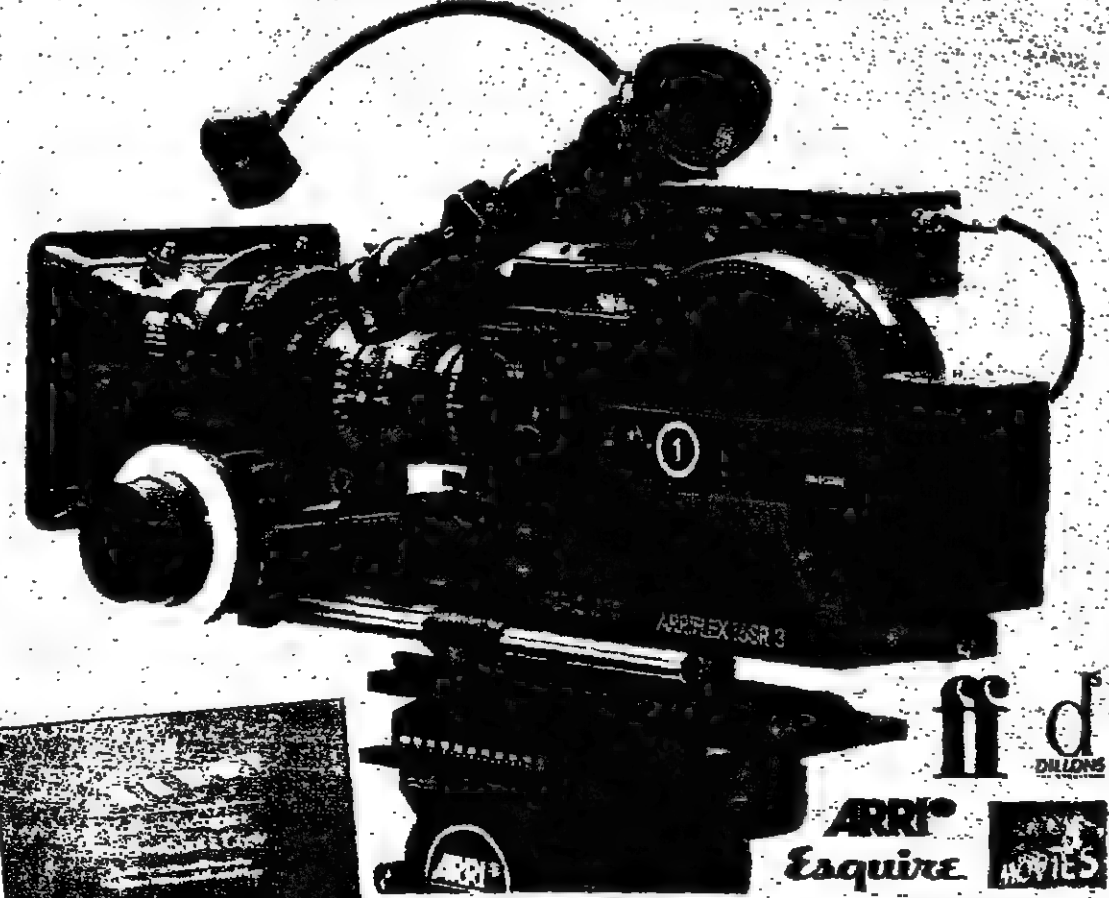
At 23 Rodriguez proved anyone with artistic skill and determination can make a successful film on a low budget. Now you have an opportunity to be a film director just like him.

All you have to do is answer the five questions on our competition entry form and tell us, in 20 words or less, what your movie would be about. You will find the answers in Rodriguez's *Rebel Without a Crew* published by Faber and Faber and on sale exclusively at all Dillons The Bookstores, at the special price of £6. The book tells how Rodriguez made *El Mariachi* on a shoestring — and with a handheld camera.

First prize is an Arriflex 16 SR3, a state-of-the-art motion picture camera worth £56,000. The winner will meet Rodriguez and attend a film-making masterclass given by the director himself.

There are ten runners-up prizes of Sony HandyCams plus Fuji Film and signed copies of *Rebel Without a Crew*.

Win an Arriflex camera worth £56,000



REBEL WITHOUT A CREW BOOK OFFER

Complete this order form and post it to: *The Times/Rebel without a Crew Book Offer*, PO Box 6827, London E2 6SR. Or telephone the Rebel Hotline on 0171 510 0104. The offer closes April 2, 1997. Please allow 14 days for delivery.

Send me (qty) ☐ Rebel without a Crew Book(s) @ £6.00 each including p&p

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I enclose a cheque for £ _____ payable to PBS Ltd or charge my credit/credit card

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No _____

Exp. Date _____ Signature _____

HOW TO ENTER

You will find the answers to the questions in *Rebel Without a Crew*. If you have not read the book, you can buy it by credit card on 0171-510 0104 or use the order form left. You can also buy the special edition which has a competition entry form printed inside at any branch of Dillons The Bookstores. Post the entry form (one also appears right) to: *The Times Do You Want to Make a Movie Competition*, PO Box 6885, London E2 6SR. The closing date for entries is Wednesday April 2, 1997. All correct entries will be judged by a panel consisting of Robert Rodriguez, and representatives from *The Times*, Faber and Faber, *Esquire* magazine and Arri (GB) Ltd.

THE MOVIE COMPETITION

Post this entry form to: *The Times Do You Want to Make a Movie Competition*, PO Box 6885, London E2 6SR. Closing date: April 2, 1997. The winners will be the persons who correctly answer the five questions and who, in the opinion of the judges, submit the most apt and original description telling us what their film would be about. Normal TNL competition rules apply, available on request.

1. In which city are most of Woody Allen's films shot?
2. Robert Rodriguez was 23 when he made his first film. How old was Steven Spielberg when he made *Jaws*?
3. Which film did Rodriguez make when he was a Lab Rat?
4. What is the name of the first script Rodriguez wrote for the screen?
5. At what time of day did Rodriguez make his first film?

Tell us in 20 words or less what your movie would be about

Title _____ Initials _____ Surname _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ Daytime tel _____

If you would prefer not to receive information and offers from organisations carefully selected by *The Times/Dillons*, please tick ☐

COMPETITION RULES 1. Entries, limited to persons aged 12 years and above, must be on an official entry form available from either *The Times* or *Esquire* magazine. Every form will also include in copies of *Rebel Without a Crew* by Robert Rodriguez, available at Dillons The Bookstores. My purchase certificate is enclosed. 2. Entries must be received by first post Wednesday April 2, 1997. No photocopies will be accepted. 3. There is no limit to the number of entries an individual may submit provided each one is on an official entry form. 4. The competition will be judged by the panel by Friday April 25, 1997. 5. The first prize winner will be selected from all correct entries and will be the person who, in the opinion of the judges, submits the most apt and original description of the film they would like to make. 6. Ten runners-up will each receive a Sony HandyCam and Fuji Film and signed copies of *Rebel Without a Crew*. 7. The decision of the judging panel is final and no correspondence will be entered into. 8. Winners will be notified by post after May 10, 1997. 9. The winners must agree to publicity and normal *Times* Newspapers Ltd competition rules apply, available on request. 10. The Arriflex 16SR3 camera, the winner will get consists of: main body, motor, battery, charger (camera pictured above may have certain details not included in the prize).

CHANGING TIMES

February 12, 1997 Tel: 01753 34461 Fax: 25770 Poc: 27671 FTSK Coll: 301 Poc: 8561 Underlying security price		Apr 29 61 29 98 123 157 195 239 283 327 371 415 459 503 547 591 635 679 723 767 811 855 899 943 987 1031 1075 1119 1163 1207 1251 1295 1339 1383 1427 1471 1515 1559 1603 1647 1691 1735 1779 1823 1867 1911 1955 1999 2043 2087 2131 2175 2219 2263 2307 2351 2395 2439 2483 2527 2571 2615 2659 2703 2747 2791 2835 2879 2923 2967 3011 3055 3099 3143 3187 3231 3275 3319 3363 3407 3451 3495 3539 3583 3627 3671 3715 3759 3803 3847 3891 3935 3979 4023 4067 4111 4155 4199 4243 4287 4331 4375 4419 4463 4507 4551 4595 4639 4683 4727 4771 4815 4859 4903 4947 4991 5035 5079 5123 5167 5211 5255 5299 5343 5387 5431 5475 5519 5563 5607 5651 5695 5739 5783 5827 5871 5915 5959 6003 6047 6091 6135 6179 6223 6267 6311 6355 6399 6443 6487 6531 6575 6619 6663 6707 6751 6795 6839 6883 6927 6971 7015 7059 7103 7147 7191 7235 7279 7323 7367 7411 7455 7499 7543 7587 7631 7675 7719 7763 7807 7851 7895 7939 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Sharp rise predicted in level of City and corporate fraud

By ROBERT MILLER

CORPORATE and City fraud is expected to rise sharply over the next five years, according to an authoritative survey published today.

The report, conducted through *Accountancy Age* magazine for the audit faculty of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, says the likely rise in fraud can be blamed on lower standards of personal ethics, increased pressure on individuals to perform and the impact of smaller workforces.

Nearly 70 per cent of those who responded to the survey

identified misrepresentation of results as the area of fraud that would have the greatest impact on British companies in the next five years.

Ian Huntington, a partner at KPMG, the accountant, and a member of the Audit Faculty fraud working party, said that such a situation could arise when a poor-performing division within a company was set a series of sales targets. In order to achieve the targets certain types of sales could be "created" to give the impression that the targets had been met.

The other key risk areas identified were tender-fixing (53 per cent), transactions with related parties and the manipulation of computer programs (both 40 per cent). The latter two areas were considered the most difficult to detect, with 52 per cent again mentioning computers.

Tender-fixing, which often involves people within a company or organisation feeding useful inside information to help bidders pitch their contracts at the right level, has now become a European-wide issue. Per Brix Knudsen, di-

rector of the European Commission's anti-fraud co-ordination unit, recently warned that international fraudsters were turning to frauds involving public procurement and tendering for public contracts. These include bribes to gain lucrative grants and financial assistance.

Respondents to the survey said that legislation to protect "whistleblowers" and improvement of anti-fraud measures by company management were likely to be the most effective method of reducing the incidence or effects of

fraud. The report concluded that the development of an anti-fraud policy, and an annual review of fraud risk by organisations, would ensure that internal controls were designed to prevent and detect fraud.

Gerry Archer, chairman of the audit faculty, said: "As the survey shows, fraud is expected to become an even greater problem in the next few years and it underlines the importance of a concerted effort by government, business and the professional to tackle this issue."

Increase in use of derivatives at UK companies

By ADAM JONES

UK corporations and pension funds are increasingly using derivatives, the financial instruments that can cripple organisations when misused.

The Association of Corporate Treasurers (Act) published a study yesterday of ways its members are using derivatives to offset risk. Their growing popularity comes in the face of enormous losses suffered by some hapless enthusiasts, including a record \$1.7 billion wiped from the finances of Orange County in America by interest rate speculation.

Act expects the UK trend to increase. Jeremy Wagener, director-general, said derivatives were a useful tool if used knowledgeably.

He said: "Almost all the derivatives scandals we have seen are failures in the management control, not in the derivatives themselves."

He said shareholders should be kept informed of a company's derivatives policy.

David Creed, group treasurer at Tate & Lyle, said directors have a responsibility to understand and monitor the use of derivatives at their company. He said: "Directors do need to ask some pointed questions." But he added that derivatives have a reputation encompassing "fear, difficulty and black-art mathematics" that was not always deserved. He said: "They are just financial instruments."

One of the most striking uses of derivatives highlighted by Act followed the reorganisation of ICI's pension fund after the demerger with Zeneca. The demerger had left ICI with a higher proportion of pensioners to contributors.

Trustees gave the go-ahead for up to £1 billion to be committed to futures contracts. They were needed to safeguard against potential losses from market rises during £2 billion of equity shuffling. Individual prices can be inflated by 5 per cent or more when the market spots this kind of activity.

The cost of the reorganisation could, thus have wiped out the intended strategic benefits. ICI bought £200 million of gilt futures and sold £200 million of equity futures as a hedge. The strategy worked and the contracts were ended after the transition.



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Medway Insurance seeks entry to AIM

Medway Insurance Group is to seek entry to the Alternative Investment Market by way of a share placing.

The company, set up in December as a Lloyd's-orientated, US-licensed insurance company, is to raise about £70 million to finance the \$54 million acquisition of Hansa Re, a US-licensed insurer, from Focus Insurance Holdings and to provide additional working capital.

Hansa Re has multi-line insurance licences in 16 states, including New York, California and Texas, and has reinsurance-only licences or is an accredited reinsurer in a further 19. It hopes to increase its multi-line licences to cover all 50 states as soon as possible.

Hansa Re is to be renamed Medway Insurance Company, and recapitalised with net assets of \$100 million.

Internet boost

Internet Technology, the Internet connection company that reversed into two AIM-listed property firms last year, said business had risen by 50 per cent in the past five months. However, costs of the takeover pushed pre-tax losses to £1 million (£8,000 loss) for the year to October 31. There is no dividend. Laurence Blackall, chief executive, said most of the property acquired with Capital & Western and Ballynary had been sold at a profit.

Freeport up

Freeport Leisure, the operator of factory outlet shopping villages, more than doubled pre-tax profits to £1.02 million, from £502,000, in its half year to December 28. Turnover rose to £32 million, from £21 million. Earnings per share were 3.4p, up from 2.7p. There is no interim dividend, but Freeport proposes to recommend a final dividend. The shares rose 5p to 128p.

Standard post

Jim Spowart, former managing director of Direct Line financial services, is to join Standard Life on Monday as general manager (banking services). He will be responsible for the mutual's existing deposit-taking facilities and for the development of other personal banking services. He will report to Jim Stretton, chief executive of UK operations.



Neville Davis said that Compel was benefiting as companies switched from mainframe to desktop computers

Compel climbs to half-time record

A STRONG performance in all activities helped Compel, the computer services group, to return record half-year results yesterday (Fraser Nelson writes).

The company, which sells and supports desktop computers, said it was continuing to benefit from the market's

move away from large mainframe systems and towards smaller desktop computers.

Neville Davis, chairman, said that about 70 per cent of corporate computer budgets were now being spent on desktop systems, against 63 per cent last year and 50 per cent three years ago. He

predicted that the growth rate would continue.

Compel secured two significant contracts over the year, and is deploying 60 of its staff to work full-time with the new clients.

He said that second-half results would be buoyed by the contribution of Hamilton,

the computer rentals group it bought last month. Its shares gained 12½p to close at a six-month high of 20½p yesterday.

Pre-tax profits of £1.7 million (£1.44 million) for the six months to December 31, lifted earnings to 7.09p (6.06p) per share. An interim dividend of 1.8p is due on May 2.

Aortech raises £4m by placing

By FRASER NELSON

AORTECH INTERNATIONAL, a Scottish manufacturer of mechanical heart valves, has raised £4.5 million through a placing on the Alternative Investment Market to fuel its attempt to break America's grip on the worldwide market.

The company, which makes its Ultracor tilting disc valve in Lanarkshire, will be valued at £24.1 million. It said that the money will allow the creation of a distribution network across Europe, working towards its target of a 15 per cent command of the global market in seven years.

More than 6,000 of its valves have been sold in 18 countries, but the company said the lack of a coherent network was impeding its growth. Worldwide sales of valves totalled \$700 million in

1996. The market was dominated by US companies.

Aortech is forecasting sales of £2.17 million in the year to March 31, and a pre-tax loss of £1.16 million. It plans to break even later this year.

Gordon Wright, co-founder and chairman of the company, is buying back the distribution rights for Ultracor from one of his other companies for £750,000. He and Eddie McDaid, managing director, will both become paper millionaires after the placing, each gaining a shareholding worth £6.65 million.

Bell Lawrie White has placed 3.6 million shares with institutions at 125p apiece. Dealing in the shares begins on February 26.

Timesup, page 30

Exporters expound on success

BRITAIN'S exporters believe that personal contacts are the most important factor when it comes to success abroad, according to a survey of 345 British businesses by the Chartered Institute of Marketing (Alasdair Murray writes).

More than 50 per cent of companies said export strategies were influenced by who they knew and by first-hand information on market conditions. The survey suggests local contacts are considered more important in export decisions than exchange rate volatility, which was considered important by 42 per cent. Only 25 per cent considered the impact of regulations and tariffs as the most important issue, while 13 per cent said that language barriers restricted their export programme.

Shares record for Commonwealth

FROM RACHEL BRIDGE IN SYDNEY

SHARES of Commonwealth Bank, Australia's biggest retail bank, rose to a record on the Australian stock exchange yesterday after the company unveiled an 11 per cent rise in first-half operating profits to A\$602 million (£300 million), comfortably ahead of expectations.

Commonwealth shares rose 50 cents to A\$13.91, well ahead of the A\$10.45 price at which the Australian Government sold its remaining 50.4 per cent stake in the bank last July. Banking analysts had been looking for an operating profit of about A\$550 million for the half year to December. Most of the improvement in profits came from strong growth in lending volumes as a result of the bank's move to lead the way in cutting mort-

gage rates in the Australian market. David Murray, managing director, said: "The bank's decision last June to lower the standard variable home loan interest rate resulted in home lending growth above expectations. The strong growth in business volumes reflects the very positive response by customers to our determination to provide a competitive range of banking and financial services that meets their needs."

Commonwealth Bank yesterday announced a further 0.7 per cent reduction in its standard home loan rate to 7.55 per cent and a 0.4 per cent cut in its basic home loan rate to 6.95 per cent. Mr Murray said that the bank is now also likely to exceed profit expectations for the full year.

Life Sciences in line with forecasts at £24m

By MARTIN BARROW

LIFE SCIENCES International, the laboratory equipment company that has agreed to a £235.9 million takeover bid by Thermo Instrument Systems, of the United States, yesterday reported a rise in pre-tax profits to £23.89 million in 1996, from £20.7 million in the previous year.

The results, which were in line with an estimate given by the company when the bid was announced last month, included a net exceptional charge of £3.3 million, arising from a £7 million restructuring programme, offset by a £3.7 million gain on the liquidation of foreign exchange contracts. Profits before tax and exceptional items rose to £27.2 million, from £24 million.

The company, whose chairman is Sir Christopher Bland, said the consolida-



Bland: difficult conditions

tion within the pharmaceutical industry, and pressure on healthcare costs in developed countries continued to produce difficult trading conditions. These conditions were beginning to recede, although

competition remains intense. The restructuring programme, aimed at reducing costs, is expected to yield additional pre-tax profits of £3.5 million a year.

Turnover last year rose to £229.7 million, from £204.8 million, bolstered by a full-year contribution from Spectronic Instruments, the American spectrophotometer manufacturer acquired in 1995. Underlying sales growth, adjusted for the impact of acquisitions and currency fluctuations, was 8 per cent.

Earnings, fully diluted, rose to 8.6p a share from 7.8p. The total dividend is increased to 4.6p a share from 4.4p, with a second interim dividend of 3p. Thermo said yesterday that it had received valid acceptances in respect of 63.84 per cent of Life Sciences. In addition, the bidder has acquired a 3.26 per cent interest. The offer has been extended until March 4.

RJB explores plan for clean coal power plant

By OUR CITY STAFF

RJB MINING has initiated a joint study with Texaco to explore the feasibility of developing Britain's first large-scale "clean coal" power station.

The proposed new station at Kellingly in West Yorkshire would incorporate technology currently in operation at a Texaco plant in Tampa, Florida, with a proven record for efficiency and emission reduction and could kick-start demand for similar projects.

RJB, the company that succeeded British Coal in England and Wales, is assessing plans for the development of a 400MW clean coal power station on a site adjacent to RJB's Kellingly colliery. The site has ready access to all the facilities needed to sustain new generation capacity, including fuel, access to the grid system, water and a skilled workforce. Once planning consents



Budge: exciting opportunity

have been obtained the clean coal power station would take about two years to construct. It would generate enough power to supply a city the size of Sheffield and would consume about one million tonnes of

coal a year, just half the planned annual output of the Kellingly mine, where 700 people are employed. It would incorporate Texaco's gasification technology in an integrated gasification combined cycle plant similar to the one in Tampa.

Richard Budge, chief executive of RJB, said: "This is an exciting opportunity offering the first commercial-scale development of clean coal technology in the UK."

Mr Budge said he hoped the project would encourage the development of other clean coal facilities to ensure the market for coal remained strong well into the next century.

He added: "We believe that, just as there are targets for renewable technologies, inside tracks for gas power stations and a levy to support the nuclear programme, there should be a programme for clean coal technology."

THE TIMES UNIT TRUST INFORMATION SERVICE

[illegible]

Equities end all square

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES						
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
BANKS						
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
BREWERIES, PUBS & REST						
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS						
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
BUILDING & CONSTRUCTION						
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
ELECTRICITY						
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
ELECTRONIC & ELECT						
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
ENGINEERING						
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
CHEMICALS						
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
DISTRIBUTORS						
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE

1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
ENGINEERING, VEHICLES						
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
FOOD MANUFACTURERS						
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
HOUSEHOLD GOODS						
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
INSURANCE						
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
INVESTMENT TRUSTS						
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE

1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
LEISURE & HOTELS						
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
MEDIA						
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
SHORTS (under 5 years)						
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
LONGS (over 15 years)						
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
UNDATED						
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
INDEX-LINKED (on projected inflation of...)						
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE

1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
MINING						
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
OIL & GAS						
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
OTHER FINANCIAL						
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE

1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
PROPERTY						
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
RETAILERS, FOOD						
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
RETAILERS, GENERAL						
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
WATER						
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE

1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
PHARMACEUTICALS						
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
PRINTING & PAPER						
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
SUPPORT SERVICES						
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
TELECOMMUNICATIONS						
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
TEXTILES & APPAREL						
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
TRANSPORT						
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE

1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET						
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE
1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	PE

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Court of Appeal

Law Report February 13 1997

Court of Appeal

Secondary disaster victim cannot recover

McFarlane v Wilkinson and Another
Hegarty v E. E. Caledonia Ltd

Before Lord Justice Saville, Lord Justice Hutton and Lord Justice Brooke

[Judgment February 5]

A plaintiff on a support vessel near the Piper Alpha oil rig explosion could not recover damages for injury as a primary victim, as it was not reasonably foreseeable to the defendants that the chain of events triggered off by their negligence would include the risk that someone would reasonably have such a fear of immediate injury to himself as to lead to shock-induced psychiatric illness.

Nor could he succeed in an action for breach of statutory duty as he could not satisfy the court that a likely, and not merely a foreseeable outcome of the relevant breach of duty, was that the mental health of someone on a rescue vessel more than 100 metres away would be impaired.

While it was no doubt true that some litigants achieved favourable settlements or obtained judgments which they should not have obtained if the law had been applied correctly, the court was not concerned to rectify such anomalies in the pleadings which in his or her opinion was not likely to succeed at trial but which was reasonably arguable. It would be quite wrong to conclude from such cases that the law was not lawfully decided.

The Court of Appeal so held in allowing appeals by Mr Nigel Wilkinson, QC and Miss Anna

Guggenheim, of counsel, against so much of the judgment of Mr Justice Rix on July 26, 1995 as failed to strike out the whole of a statement of claim in an action for professional negligence in connection with their alleged failure, inter alia, to include in the pleadings an alternative allegation of breach of statutory duty in an action for damages for negligence brought by Francis McFarlane against E. E. Caledonia Ltd, and in dismissing an appeal by Mr William Hegarty from a decision of Mr Justice Popplewell on a preliminary point, on December 1, 1995, that he was not owed any genuine common law or statutory duty by the defendants, E. E. Caledonia Ltd, arising out of the Piper Alpha explosion.

Regulation 32 of the Offshore Installations (Operational Safety, Health and Welfare) Regulations (SI 1976 No 1019) provides: "It shall be the duty of every person, on or near an offshore installation—(a) not to do anything likely to endanger the safety or health of himself or other persons on or near the installation or to render unsafe any equipment used on or near it."

Mr Rupert Jackson, QC and Mr Roger Stewart for Mr Wilkinson and Miss Guggenheim; Mr Benet Hyman, QC and Mr Paul Loneragan for Mr McFarlane; Mr Christopher Gardner, QC and Mr Jonathan Waite for Mr Hegarty; Mr Adrian Hamilton, QC and Mr Alistair Schaff for E. E. Caledonia Ltd.

LORD JUSTICE BROOKE said that for the purpose of obtaining a ruling on a preliminary issue it was taken as agreed that each plaintiff had suffered psychiatric injury as a result of witnessing the terrifying events in the North Sea at the time of the Piper Alpha disaster in July 1988.

Both men were employed as painters on that rig during the day

and at night were housed in the MV Thoros, which was lying about 550 metres south-west of the rig when the explosion occurred at about 10pm.

Miss Guggenheim, as junior counsel, and Mr Wilkinson, as leading counsel, were instructed to act for Mr McFarlane. His claim succeeded on a preliminary issue of liability before Mr Justice Smith in December 1992 but that judgment was overturned by the Court of Appeal (The Times September 30, 1993).

In July 1995 Mr Justice Rix gave judgment on Mr McFarlane's claim that the barristers were negligent. In short, the judge held that if it could be shown the original defendants were in breach of a statutory duty owed to any person on or near the Piper Alpha, then Mr McFarlane, as another person near the Piper Alpha at the relevant time, could have recovered damages for his psychiatric illness.

The judge rejected a contention by Mr Hyman that even if, contrary to his view, Mr McFarlane had no viable cause of action for breach of statutory duty, he could nevertheless recover damages for the loss of the opportunity of negotiating a settlement of his claim in reliance on that point because through his barristers' negligence the point had not been pleaded.

On December 1, 1995 Mr Justice Popplewell gave judgment in Mr Hegarty's appeal, which involved a claim for damages for breach of statutory duty.

In doing so he differed from Mr Justice Rix on the interpretation of the relevant regulation. For that reason both appeals were listed to be heard together.

The attractiveness of a claim arising from the regulations to plaintiffs in the position of Mr McFarlane and Mr Hegarty was that a cause of action for breach of

statutory duty, if a good one, would with one bound free them from the control mechanisms imposed on the claims of secondary victims by the House of Lords in *Alcock v Chief Constable of South Yorkshire Police* [1992] 1 AC 310 in much the same way as most of the successful police plaintiffs in *Frost v Chief Constable of South Yorkshire Police* (The Times November 6, 1996) were able to recover damages as primary victims by reason of a breach of duty contained in their contracts of employment.

If the plaintiffs could bring their claim within the language of the regulation, that imposed strict liability, see *MacMillan v Wimpsey Offshore Engineers and Constructors* [1991] SLT 515.

His Lordship considered that on the evidence Mr Justice Popplewell was right not to identify Mr Hegarty as a primary victim. Once he had found that a fireball which stopped short of Thoros, and that Thoros was close to danger but was not in fact in danger, it was almost inevitable that he should hold that Mr Hegarty's fear for his life was not a rational one. After all the fireball fished out more than 50 metres away from where Mr Hegarty was when he saw it.

Turning to Mr Hegarty's claim for breach of statutory duty, it had been persuasively submitted to the court that the mere fact that a breach of the regulations was proved would not be sufficient.

The plaintiff must fall within the class of persons which the statute was intended to protect.

Most of the 1976 Regulations were concerned with protecting the safety of the installation in question and those on it. Regulation 32 was different because it included those who were near the installation

when the breach occurred. However, his Lordship was quite satisfied, from the arguments addressed to the court, that they only qualified for protection if the breach was likely to endanger them, that is that it was probable that it would.

In order to succeed the plaintiff would have to satisfy the court that he was likely to be a foreseeable outcome of the breach of duty was that the mental health of someone on a rescue vessel more than 100 metres away would be impaired.

During the course of his submissions on the barristers' appeal, Mr Hyman boldly argued that if a point was properly arguable and that the reasonable prospect of success then a barrister would be in breach of a duty of care to his client if that point was not included in the pleading.

He pointed out that it was not unknown for barristers' points to succeed at trial, or for clients to accept sums offered in settlement because they mistakenly saw more merit in the point than was justified.

The evidence showed that junior counsel had interpreted the effect of regulation 32(3)(a) correctly. She was also correct in her judgment that a plea of breach of statutory duty added nothing to the plea based on negligence, involving as it did the higher hurdle of likelihood, or probability, rather than foreseeability.

It was quite absurd to consider that she could be liable in negligence for exercising her judgment in the way that she did, or that leading counsel could be negligent in failing to advise the inclusion of that plea.

LORD JUSTICE HUTTON and LORD JUSTICE SAVILLE agreed.

Solicitors: Reynolds Porter Chamberlain; Evans & Coleman; Levinson Gray; Ince & Company.

Direct debit precludes set-off defence

Esso Petroleum Co Ltd v Milton

Before Lord Justice Simon Brown, Lord Justice Thorpe and Sir John Balfour

[Judgment February 5]

Modern commercial practice was to treat a payment by direct debit for fuel deliveries as a payment by cheque and, as such, the equivalent of cash. In general, a payment by direct debit for goods or services received should preclude a defence of set-off.

The Court of Appeal (Lord Justice Simon Brown, dissenting on the above point) so stated in allowing an appeal by the plaintiffs, Esso Petroleum Co Ltd, from the decision of Judge Andrew Thompson, QC, sitting in Exeter as a judge of the Queen's Bench Division on April 12, 1996, when he dismissed their application for summary judgment against the defendant, Howard James Milton.

The defendant was the licensee of two of the plaintiffs' service stations in Exeter. His case was that he could not continue to operate those stations profitably on the terms the plaintiffs were imposing, so that he regarded the business relationship between them as being over.

Between April 1 and 9, 1996 the plaintiffs made nine fuel deliveries to the defendant totalling £167,885. Deliveries were routinely paid for by direct debit arrangements. The defendant had cancelled his direct debit mandate on April 9.

Mr Mark Haggood, QC, for the plaintiffs; Mr Michael Sone for the defendant.

LORD JUSTICE SIMON BROWN said that the central question was whether under the direct debit system the debtor should be entitled to escape the specially restrictive rules as to the stay of judgments and the scope of defences which apply with regard to dishonoured cheques.

In submitting that Mr Haggood relied on *Nova (Perso) Knit Ltd v Kensington and Chelsea RDC* [1977] 1 WLR 713, 720 per Lord Wilberforce. Although it would be

commercially convenient to place direct debit arrangements on the same footing as cheques, his Lordship was ultimately unpersuaded by the argument.

The plaintiffs contended, inter alia, that the defendant's counterclaim did not truly impugn their entitlement to immediate payment for fuel deliveries so that no equitable set-off could in justice arise.

For equitable set-off to apply it must be established first, that the counterclaim was at least as closely connected with the same transaction as that giving rise to the claim, and second, that the relationship between the respective claims was such that it would be manifestly unjust to allow one to be enforced without regard to the other.

The mere fact both claim and counterclaim arose out of a single trading relationship between the parties was, in his Lordship's judgment, wholly insufficient to support an equitable set-off.

His Lordship's reasons for accepting the plaintiffs' insufficient connection argument included much of the thinking underlying their direct debit argument.

The two arguments were by no means mirror images of each other, in particular because of the additional range of considerations to which regard could, indeed must, be had, when deciding the insufficient argument.

Not least among these was, as stated, the essentially liquid nature of the commodity here supplied, a consideration obviously irrelevant to the direct debit argument. Tempting though it was to allow the appeal on that crisper, narrower ground, his Lordship was convinced that it would be a mistake to do so.

To treat cheques as cash was historically justifiable and achieved a broad measure of certainty and justice to extend that principle to direct debit arrangements would not. His Lordship would allow the appeal only on the ground of insufficient connection.

LORD JUSTICE THORPE, agreeing in the result, said that he

would hold for the plaintiffs on the direct debit argument.

While his Lordship was conscious of the difficulties and dangers involved in such an extension, he believed that it was consistent with the principle stated by Lord Wilberforce in the *Nova (Perso) Knit* case.

Where goods were effectively sold for cash the seller should have the security of cash brought when for mutual convenience the parties had adopted the banking mechanism in general usage for the transfer of cash from one account to another. Twenty years ago that was still by cheque.

The defendant's annual petrol purchases amounted to about £5 million and the plaintiffs' daily collection through the direct debit system for all petrol sales varied between £9 and £20 million. The modern mechanism for handling what were effectively cash sales on a large scale was the direct debit system.

So it seemed to his Lordship that it was a natural evolution rather than an extension of the *Nova Knit* principle to hold that the seller of goods for cash transferred by the direct debit mechanism should be in no worse position than if he had accepted a cheque on delivery.

SIR JOHN BALCOMBE agreed with Lord Justice Thorpe and would allow the appeal also on the ground of the direct debit argument. Modern practice was to treat a direct debit in the same way as a payment by cheque and, as such, the equivalent of cash.

Like Lord Justice Thorpe, his Lordship accepted the fundamental principle that, in general, a payment by direct debit for goods or services received should preclude a defence of set-off.

His Lordship agreed with Lord Justice Simon Brown, and for the reasons he gave, that the counterclaim was insufficiently connected with the claim to allow for the defence of equitable set-off.

Solicitors: Irwin Mitchell, Sheffield; Anstey Sargent & Probert, Exeter.

Raising illegality under foreign law

Sharab v Salfiti

It was difficult to think of circumstances where it would be fair for the Court of Appeal to allow an application by one party to legal proceedings for a judgment to be made so as to plead the illegality of another party's conduct under foreign law.

The Court of Appeal (Lord Justice Nourse, Lord Justice Judge and Lord Justice Waller) so stated on December 12 in a reserved judgment refusing an application by *Uzma Salfiti* for leave to adduce evidence as to Libyan law, and dismissing her appeal from Mr Justice Friele's November 1995 that he be ordered to pay US\$2.1 million to *Daad Sharab*.

LORD JUSTICE WALLER said that in truth the defendant's application to introduce evidence was an application to amend the defence by making serious allegations against the plaintiff to which there had been no reference at the trial.

If a party wanted to take a point in its favour raising illegality under a foreign law he was free to do so but it had to be pleaded and proved like any other aspect of the case. The allegation that someone had committed an offence was often a very serious allegation to make.

It would be difficult to think of circumstances where it would be fair to allow, on the application of a party, an amendment to plead the commission of a serious offence under foreign law for the first time in the Court of Appeal, never mind the introduction of fresh evidence to prove it.

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National Federation of Self-Employed and Small Businesses Ltd v Phyllip

Before Mr Justice Kirkwood, Lord Gledhill of Cleve and Mrs J. Mannix

[Judgment January 31]

The National Federation of Self-Employed and Small Businesses Ltd, an organisation with a membership of 200,000 with the object of protecting, promoting and furthering the interests of persons who were self-employed or who directed or controlled small businesses, was held to be an "organisation of employers" within section 12 of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, so that a woman whose membership was not renewed was entitled to bring a complaint of sex discrimination against it.

The Employment Appeal Tribunal so held when dismissing an appeal from an industrial tribunal sitting at Ashford, Kent last June

that it had jurisdiction to hear a complaint by the applicant, Mrs E. Phyllip, that the federation had unlawfully discriminated against her on the ground of her sex or marital status.

Section 12 of the 1975 Act provides: "(1) This section applies to an organisation of workers, an organisation of employers, or any other organisation whose members carry on a particular profession or trade for the purposes of the organisation or the organisation's objects."

"(2) It is unlawful for an organisation to which this section applies, in the case of a woman who is a member of the organisation, to discriminate against her... (b) by depriving her of membership."

Ms Daphne Romney for the federation; Mr Michael Ford for the applicant.

MR JUSTICE KIRKWOOD, delivering the judgment of the tribunal, said that the applicant

and her husband had been members of the federation for 20 years. In 1995 the federation had conducted some disciplinary process against Mr Phyllip in which the applicant had represented her husband. In January 1996 the national council of the federation decided not to renew her membership.

The applicant maintained she had been discriminated against on the ground of her sex or marital status against a complaint to an industrial tribunal under section 12 of the 1975 Act.

In response the federation took the preliminary point that it was not an organisation to which section 12 applied.

The federation argument was two-fold: 1 While a majority of its members were in fact employers, a minority were self-employed people who had no employees. Thus it failed to qualify as an organisation of employers on the membership test.

2 The purpose of the formation of the organisation was not primarily to do with the interests of members as employers but to do with their interests as business people. Accordingly it failed to qualify on the purpose test.

The declared objects of the federation were to "protect, promote and further the interests of persons who are self-employed or direct or control small businesses and to provide a national voice and platform for such persons."

The phrase "employers' association" was defined in section 12(1) of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992. That was a separate and distinct Act of Parliament with different purposes from the 1975 Act. It was the federation which was not an employers' association within the meaning of the 1992 Act.

Nevertheless it was worthy of note that an employers' association was defined in the 1992 Act as consisting "wholly or mainly" of

employers or individual owners of undertakings and earlier legislation used the same phrase.

It had been argued by the applicant before the industrial tribunal that the federation in fact put forward names of members for the employers' panel for the selection of members for industrial tribunals and that having accepted that it was an organisation representative of employers it could not then argue it was not an employers' organisation.

That argument was accepted by the industrial tribunal. Although the appeal tribunal could see a possible difference between an organisation representative of employers and an organisation of employers, what was important was that the federation had as one of its important characteristics that it was representative of employers.

The appeal tribunal rejected the importance attached by counsel for the federation to the "membership test" and the "purpose test" as too narrow. It was more helpful to look at characteristics.

The federation represented its members who were predominantly employers specifically as employers as well as across a range of other matters. It was an organisation of employers within the meaning of section 12 of the 1975 Act and the industrial tribunal's decision would be upheld.

Solicitors: Wallace Robinson & Morgan, Solihull; Harman & Harman, Canterbury.

there had been no reference at the trial.

If a party wanted to take a point in its favour raising illegality under a foreign law he was free to do so but it had to be pleaded and proved like any other aspect of the case. The allegation that someone had committed an offence was often a very serious allegation to make.

It would be difficult to think of circumstances where it would be fair to allow, on the application of a party, an amendment to plead the commission of a serious offence under foreign law for the first time in the Court of Appeal, never mind the introduction of fresh evidence to prove it.

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Deducting benefit from sum paid into court

Houghton v British Coal Corporation

Before Lord Justice Waite and Mr Justice Singer

[Judgment January 28]

Where a defendant in a personal injury action proposed to make a payment into court and, pursuant to section 93(2)(a) of the Social Security Administration Act 1992, withheld a certified amount of total benefit to which the plaintiff had become entitled as a result of his injury, the actual sum in court was the net figure reached after deducting that statutory withholding.

The Court of Appeal so held, allowing an appeal by the British Coal Corporation, defendants in a personal injury action, against the order of Judge Harkins at Newcastle upon Tyne County Court on August 14, 1995, whereby he set aside Deputy District Judge Powell's order upholding acceptance of their payment into court by the plaintiff, Terence Houghton. The acceptance had resulted in a stay of the action.

Ms Catherine Foster for the defendants; Mr Christopher Maisey for the plaintiff.

LORD JUSTICE WAITE said that the defendants admitted liability and proposed to make a payment into

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 13 1997
Court of Appeal
it precludes
defence

NATIONAL TRAINING AWARDS

Edward Fennell introduces a four-page report to celebrate the NTA's tenth anniversary and its commitment to learning for life.

A showcase of skills to challenge the world

The quality of training in UK industry will be a vital issue in the forthcoming general election. Already, as part of the education debate, it features prominently as one of the hottest topics on the political agenda. But it also has significance within the trade and industry wrangle over inward investment and competitiveness.

A recent policy document from the Labour Party declared: "Britain needs a world-class system of education and training... we must act now to equip all of our people with the necessary skills and education to take advantage of the information and technological revolution."

So how good is our current system?

The winners of the 1996 National Training Awards (NTAs), present in London yesterday for an awards ceremony hosted by Gillian Shephard, Secretary of State for Education and Employment, demonstrate that there are now scores of examples of training excellence.

On show were some 100 organisations — from manufacturing to retail, financial services to the NHS — together with 18 individuals who had come through a series of assessments of the value and effectiveness of the training they had provided.

At the heart of the awards is the principle that training must be focused on the real needs of an organisation. Training for its own sake carries little weight. Instead, training is seen as an investment of time and money which must be used to achieve concrete objectives.

In short, there should be a clear "loop" of cause and effect which links the development and implementation of training programmes with improvements in business effectiveness. Prue Leith, the patron of this year's awards, says that there is an encouraging trend in industry to target specific objectives.

One example of this comes from Southern Electric, which was faced with the retirement of 500 experienced staff and needed to restock its skill base very quickly. It identified 27 key tasks and 400 staff who would perform them. It then put on a training course costing £333,000, which transformed the organisation. Both the company's costs and complaints dropped sharply.

The key question about the awards, however, is whether the winners are representative of the

UK economy as a whole, or merely islands of excellence in a sea of mediocrity.

Vocational training used to be, with some important exceptions, notoriously weak. There is now general agreement that it has improved significantly, but still not enough. A variety of government initiatives — of which the awards are one of the best known — have helped to create the recognition that properly managed training is a vital ingredient in business success. By providing role models, the NTAs have aimed to both inspire and teach what could be achieved if training were delivered effectively.

This year provides a good opportunity to assess how valuable the awards have been. The event is celebrating its tenth anniversary and changes are afoot which will give it a different look from next year. In particular, there will be no more jamborees on the scale of yesterday's event. Instead, there will be a shift away from London towards the winners at the regional level, with much more effort directed towards the grassroots. The awards will go on but the format will be markedly different.

So is this a signal that, in its present form, NTAs have accomplished the task set for them?

Britain needs a world-class system of education and training...



Prue Leith: "Encouraging"



Making her mark: a student at St Mary's College, Londonderry, at work on an industrial course that will offer a brighter future

Prue Leith is in no doubt that NTAs have contributed much to the switch in mood. As she points out, however, it is impossible to pinpoint their exact contribution. Instead, she describes NTAs as part of a suite of programmes — including Investors in People, the National Targets for Education and Training and the development of opportunities for lifelong learning — which have contributed to an improved commitment of training through large parts of British industry.

Recognition of the business case for training has changed particularly well with many of the developments in the public sector. The high proportion of public sector organisations among the winners is a tribute to the fact that management has become much tighter and better focused in recent years. Goals are more clearly defined than ever and disciplined training is being used to achieve them.

The Trading Standards Department at Leicestershire County Council, for example, was faced by an increase in workload and a reduction in the number of qualified staff. To deal with this, it set up a training programme for support staff which would relieve the strain on qualified trading standards officers.

A programme was developed with the local college which has enabled the service to reduce its training expenditure while performing to a higher standard. As a result, Leicestershire is now regarded as having one of the most efficient and cost-effective trading standards services in the country.

So award winners have an important story to tell. There still remains a question, however, over how many people want to listen.

Making the grade twice

As well as enjoying the announcement of their National Training Awards, a select group from among the winners also received special awards to mark their success in particularly important aspects of training, Edward Fennell writes.

In the past there have always been special awards for entries which have impressed the judges. But this year, marking the tenth anniversary of NTA, there are more awards than ever including, notably, the ten best entries showing commitment to lifetime learning.

This is especially relevant for the 1996 awards, since the whole year was dedicated by the Department for Education and Employment to raising awareness of the importance of lifetime learning.

One impressive story comes from St Mary's College in Londonderry, Northern Ireland, which already has a fine record for achieving the Investors in People (IIP) standard and also for having won two charter marks and a European award of excellence.

The college is set in an area of high unemployment and felt the need to raise aspirations and to give the local community a sense of the value of education.

So rather than just concentrating on the pupils, the school put in place a training programme involving teachers, parents and the support staff. Great strides have now been made and, despite the difficulties in the province, St Mary's offers hope for the future. One of the gaps normally cited in NTA reviews is for entries from small and medium-sized firms. To raise the profile of this sector, the

Spotlight on selected teams who have won special awards

Confederation of British Industry makes an award for the best small company winner.

This year the award went to Quidnunc, an information technology consultancy based in west London, which has achieved annual growth of 35 per cent in each of the past three years. Such growth can be sustained only through rigorous and extensive training. Quidnunc has set up a programme in which every member of staff takes part and which is seen to contribute directly to the quality of



Quidnunc, an IT consultancy

the company's output. Claire Sutton, the firm's business manager, claims that new business is being won by the company directly as a result of its training programme — proof that training pays.

That is also true of all the winners of the special award for IIP. These are especially interesting because, according to Geoff Armstrong, the chairman of the judging panel, the IIP initiative (which stems from the Department for Education and Employment) has inspired many of the entrants to this year's competition.

"IIP is about much more than training — it is about the strategic directions in which an organisation is going," he says. "None the less, it is clear that IIP is having a big impact on the way managers are thinking about their organisations and how they should develop the skills necessary to make it successful."

So under the influence of IIP, many NTA entries show they have been affected by the disciplined, systematic thinking that is central to achieving the IIP standard.

For any organisations setting their sights on achieving an NTA, the IIP initiative is a good place to start.

Not among the special prizewinners but worth a particular mention is Blumay Ltd, a small plastics manufacturer based in Wiltshire. Blumay won an award ten years ago in the inaugural event and has won a second NTA this year. Such sustained dedication to training and effective management, especially from a small company, is an object lesson to all.

Women of the world

Christopher Warman talks to those in the BBC who helped win The Times award

The BBC World Service has an international reputation difficult to better, and it constantly battles to maintain its position in the face of financial constraints and competition. In the midst of a time of change, it has embarked on a remarkable training scheme in partnership with the Karsh Consultancy, which this year has won The Times award for meeting the challenge of international competition.

The project was to make the best use of the talent of the female workforce and improve the representation of women in the World Service to match that of other parts of the BBC. Broadcasting has been attractive to women as a career, but although they have joined the service with similar achievements to their male colleagues, they have not developed as fast or as far as the men.

While some of the factors holding back women were common to men, the awards judges perceived that while men were getting a career "head cold", women were suffering career "pneumonia".

The consequence, in the World Service, was that when the programme started in 1994 women at a senior level occupied 5 per cent of the senior positions. Two years later the figure had risen to 40 per cent. At the top senior executive level, the number of women increased from 9 per cent to 30 per



BBC staff who benefited from the scheme and, below, Laurence Benson and Harriet Karsh

cent between 1993 and 1996. This was achieved after Laurence Benson, equal opportunities development officer at the World Service, decided on a sustained women's development initiative and chose the Karsh Consultancy, specialists in leadership development, to design the programme.

With 25 initial candidates, the programme was designed to equip the participants with the necessary skills and knowledge to recognise their own potential as managers and leaders. It included networking seminars and work-based projects, and was intended, in Karsh's plan, to "develop skills in strategic and creative thinking, emotional resilience, assertive-

ness, interpersonal communication, initiative, developing others, judgment and leadership".

The effect of the programme was not only to increase the representation of women at all levels, but also to challenge attitudes to equal opportunities throughout the organisation.

The judges concluded: "Equal opportunities is now seen as part of the fabric of people's working lives which adds a real business benefit, and not simply as a bolt-on 'feel-good' factor."

Mr Benson commented: "The success of this programme has not just been its effectiveness in increasing the representation of women in the World Service, but also the impact it has had on the individuals who have taken part."



NATIONAL TRAINING AWARDS 1996

Secretary of State's Award for excellence in modern apprenticeships
The British Narrow Fabric Association Training Club with South Derbyshire TEC and the Knitting Lace and Narrow Fabric Industries Training Resources Agency (KLITRA)

Secretary of State's Award for training benefiting those with special needs
The Workbridge Centre

The Times Award for meeting the challenge of international competition
BBC World Service, with Karsh Consultancy

The CBI Small and Medium Enterprise Council Award for the best entry from a small company
Quidnunc Limited

The Institute for Personnel and Development Award for the provision of training excellence
NEC Semiconductors with Lothian & Edinburgh Enterprise Limited, Seagate Microelectronics Ltd, Motorola Ltd and West Lothian College

The Patron's Award
Ms Jocley Roberts

The ten best entries showing commitment to lifetime learning
Ms Irene M Stevenson
Mr Steve McHale
Ms Jocley Roberts
Case United Kingdom Limited
Hedon Salads Ltd
Eurostar (UK) Ltd
St Mary's College
Croydon Continuing Education and Training Service
Hull College with the Construction Industry Training Board
BBC World Service with Karsh Consultancy

The ten best investors
Goodys Hair Shops
SPS Technologies Ltd
Catherine Johnstone Recruitment
Initial Air Services
The Ormerod Home Trust Ltd
Breckfield JMI School
The Parkway Hotel and Conference Centre
The Uists and Barra Training Programme
Coats Viyella Home Furnishings

Growth: Hedon Salads Ltd

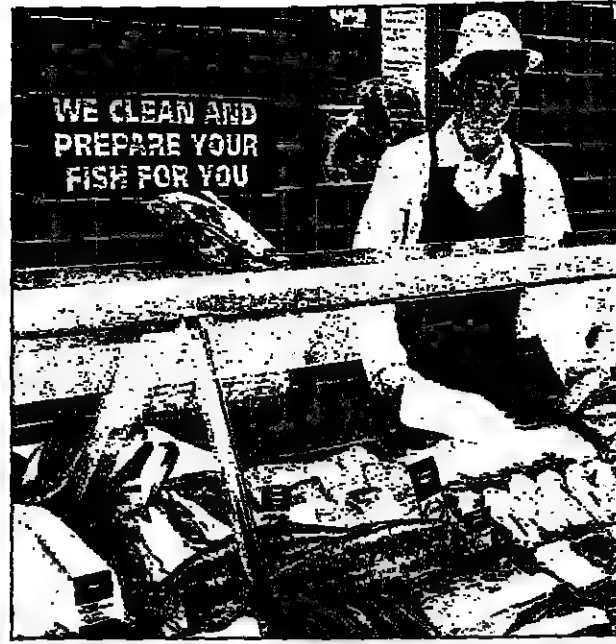
What's the secret? Michael Hatfield and Rodney Hobson reveal the magic ingredients and success stories of the winning teams



Amateur Swimming Association: raising the standards



John Pimblett: staff training acted as a stepping stone



Tesco: display of counter food was made more attractive



Ormerod Home Trust: problem solving led to a pay rise

Eurostar may have experienced flak on the track but its French language-training provision for English train drivers has had a 100 per cent pass rate and earned the company a National Training Award.

Michael Hatfield writes. Drivers are put through a 20-week language training programme, divided into modules, in two of which they stay with French families and attend a local college. The end of the course examination is held inside a simulator that mimics the driving situation, and the ability to speak and understand French is tested.

Linguistic proficiency is sometimes matched by impromptu interpretation. Confronted with a simulated deer on the line and not knowing the French word, one driver described the animal as a cow with a pantograph (the train's electric current connector) on its head.

Kiri Shah, Eurostar's language training co-ordinator, says some drivers have been nervous at the start but the enthusiasm had been remarkable. Each driver receives a London Chamber of Commerce and Industry language certificate.

In Norwich the Eastern College Poultry Department is working with the poultry industry to devise training courses for new recruits and existing employees. In recent years the industry has experienced a growing shortage of both labour and skills. Bruce Hemmatt, the human resource manager at Bernard Matthews, says: "Eastern College has worked closely with the poultry industry to help us recruit dedicated, ambitious trainees. It has also helped us to provide training which reflects the needs of our expanding and increasingly technical industry."

Another training provider to receive an award is the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA), which has retrained its tutors to raise the standards of teaching of swimming and associated sports in England. The tutors pass on their skills to teachers and coaches, of whom around 20,000 have qualified since the introduction of the higher standards. The training challenge for the ASA was that a new education training programme was needed to cater for the sport's changing needs and to incorporate NVQs into the framework of professional qualifications offered.

In all, more than 700 tutors were retrained to deliver the new courses. Smaller groups of tutors were also retrained to deliver the education pro-

gramme to other levels and to assess for NVQ Levels 2, 3 and 4. ASA tutors have benefited professionally and commercially.

Bluemay Ltd, manufacturer of plastic components and based in Devizes, Wiltshire, decided on a training programme to prepare its 70 staff for a period of radical change and restructuring of the company. The company was planning to spend £1 million on factory relocation and new moulding machines.

The main thrust of the training was to build the commitment and skills of staff to make the planned changes successful. Martin Morman, a director of the family firm, says it was important to maintain the family atmosphere and caring ethic of the organisation, and at the same time developing skills.

The courses cover areas from time management to assertiveness skills, sales training and getting the most out of others. The Industrial Society has cited Bluemay as a case study of good practice.

An innovative training programme for teachers and support staff has cut truancy levels at Breckfield JMI School, Liverpool. Though the school has a good record helping children to achieve the highest standards, it had, like many inner-city schools, a problem with a minority of misbehaving and truanting pupils.

Breckfield tackled the problem by making behaviour management a priority. The training included teachers and support staff. Now pupil attendance rates exceed 90 per cent. The success of the scheme has led the Department for Education and Employment to fund it for three years - and the school has become the first in Liverpool to be awarded Investors in People status.

The cost of recruiting and assessing a new foster carer is around £2,000, so that when the Children Act called for changes in that task, the challenge of training carers became increasingly important. The Leeds office of the British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF) and Wakefield Metropolitan District Council combined to provide an innovative training programme for foster carers, breaking new ground by linking training to the new National Vocational Qualification for foster carers.

In the first three years of the initiative, a total of 167 carers attended the courses. Felicity Collier, BAAF's director, says: "Our work with Wakefield has been unique in helping to

prepare foster parents to care for very challenging children with love, sensitivity and skill."

A new training programme devised by womenswear retailer Dorothy Perkins Retailer Ltd has contributed to a significant 9.5 per cent increase in sales. The company has recently trained its 540 branch managers to operate as managing directors of their own stores. The training involved a complete overhaul of the way the company operated, and Dorothy Perkins designed its own training package to equip their managers with the necessary skills.

The result has been that managers feel confident, involved and inspired. Sue Farrell, Swindon branch manager, says: "I feel so much more involved in the business and, by having a greater understanding, I am in a much better position to contribute to our future success."

Nationwide travel agents Going Places, based at Woking, Surrey, has dramatically reduced its recruitment turnover and ensured staff reach high industry skills levels by developing a training course. With a total staff of more than 4,500 working in 700 shops, the company needed to build up shop teams, cut its 51 per cent turnover of recruits and help staff contribute to their own shop's increase in business.

It launched an intensive 12-month course for new youth trainee recruits, which was attended by almost 300 in the first year. Much of the course focused on building sales skills and the knowledge and experience required to identify and meet customers' needs. Of the 293 participants, 257 are now fully employed by the company and 82 per cent achieved an NVQ. Staff turnover has been reduced by nearly 12 per cent.

Anne Howes, the company's training manager, says: "We invested a lot of time and resources into developing this scheme. The end result has been a resounding success."

Soon after Lindsay Burr opened the first of her Goodys Hair Salons in Norton, North Yorkshire, in 1979, she recognised the need to implement a staff training programme to increase turnover and individual staff profitability and ensure the highest level of client satisfaction.

So successful was the programme that productivity by each staff member has risen from 60 to 95 per cent. There are now five Goodys salons in the Norton area and in 1995 the company was recognised as an Investor in People.



Dorothy Perkins: staff training has increased store sales

Commitment to a Total Quality Management (TQM) approach to staff training has led to High Lea House Residential Home in Oswestry, Shropshire, being recognised as one of the most desirable residential homes in its local area and has resulted in it achieving Investors in People status.

Seven staff have learnt new therapeutic skills, 14 are now qualified in first aid, four have qualified as vocational assess-

ment that training can have on staff turnover and morale has been amply demonstrated at Norfolk County Council, Rodney Hobson writes.

At the end of the Eighties, staff turnover was reaching critical levels in the cleaning division of Norfolk County Services, the council's service arm that provides cleaning, catering and grounds service under compulsory competitive tendering.

Management time and effort was wasted in filling vacancies. When the company asked departing staff why they were going, low pay was not high on the list of reasons.

Patricia Fuller, personnel manager, says: "The problem was that staff wanted to be trained to do the job, wanted to feel a sense of belonging to an organisation and wanted to be valued. Training was implemented and succeeded in stemming the flow of staff."

All new and existing manual staff were trained by their managers in regular sessions over a six-month period. The result was a £50,000 annual saving in the cost of recruitment and advertising.

The deaths of the managing director and another senior director brought an abrupt end to an era at a Merseyside family-owned bakery. The company, established in 1921, passed into the hands of the third generation of the family.

A new management team, installed in 1990 at John Pimblett and Sons at St Helens, ran into problems and it was clear that the company had to reconsider its position in the marketplace.

The 13 retail outlets were the subject of an initiative designed to increase gross profit margins and encourage customers to spend more. Groups of 30 attended two four-hour seminars, held in the relaxed atmosphere of a local hotel.

Workers' comments formed the basis of a booklet giving guidance on attitude, behaviour and appearance. Interactive on-the-job training continued for six months under a team leader. Some staff members have since won promotion.

John Pimblett, marketing co-ordinator, says: "The training programme has acted as a stepping stone by strengthening our determination to succeed and showing us what is possible. We plan to invest £2 million in a new purpose-built bakery and extend the training programme to bakery staff."

The introduction of fish counters to a Tesco store in 1991 did not prove as successful as management had hoped. Sales showed only a small increase and when Tesco asked customers why

they were not using the counter they said the display was not inviting and staff did not know much about the fish.

The solution was to display the fish so that colours and textures were used to make presentation more attractive and to hold tasting sessions of exotic fish so staff could talk to customers about them with authority.

Gloria Turpin, training manager, says: "Staff now believe that the fish department is an exciting and innovative place to work. Staff on the fish counter are now considered to be specialists."

The Ormerod Home Trust, in Lancashire, which provides residential care and day support services for 50 adults with learning difficulties, is now committed to continuous training. The turning point came in 1993 when the charity was heavily criticised in a report by Lancashire County Social Services Department. The report called for a major change in the quality of service and the way it was delivered.

Training began by getting the 65 staff together to give the trust a new sense of direction. Jim Corley, who was appointed personnel and development manager in 1994 as a direct result, says: "Everyone was asked to offer solutions to existing problems. All views were accepted and some were implemented immediately."

Once immediate needs had been met, team building was introduced. Over three months, small groups, led by line managers, were released from their duties for a day of solving problems. All personnel now have a fully trained management structure to support their suggestions for improving the service. Apart from enjoying work more, they have a financial reward - wages are up 31 per cent since the changes were introduced.

A series of training projects for young people in the North West has brought a National Training Award for Rathbone CI, a charitable organisation. Of the 100 young people completing projects in June 1995, 81 went on to further education, training or employment or achieved qualifications.

The early retirement of 500 engineering staff after privatisation meant that Southern Electric had to replace the skills it was losing without increasing manpower.

A training programme has produced a more flexible workforce and a reduction of £11 million on the payroll. Southern, which sells electricity to 2.6 million homes and businesses in central southern England, gave experienced engineering staff a refresher

course so that they could act as trainers for 400 staff, who each undertook 300 hours of study plus on-the-job training over a year.

A Japanese production method helped SPS Technologies to turn a £26,000 investment in training into a £100,000 saving. Instead of having one long production line, the workforce at SPS, which makes fasteners for the civil and military aerospace industry, is now split into teams with a variety of skills, that are responsible for the whole manufacturing process.

The "cell" technique training programme has raised quality standards, and halved the amount of scrap and reworking. Sales per employee are up 40 per cent.

Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council Housing Department has won an award for training staff to meet the needs of minority races. Abdul Ravat, research officer, says: "The department is now providing a better service for Bangladeshi and Pakistani families and is increasingly seen as an example of good practice in ethnic monitoring by the Commission for Racial Equality."

The population of Oldham is 220,000 and the housing department manages almost 21,000 properties. The department undertook a series of courses to train councillors and staff on the Race Relations Act. Trainees were encouraged to discuss their concerns openly and frankly, resulting in a revision of recruitment procedures and policies on racial harassment.

Widmarsh Workshop at Hereford provides vocational training in catering skills for adults with varying degrees of disability. Funded by Hereford and Worcester County Council with the European Social Fund, it helps trainees to compete in the marketplace by acquiring skills and qualifications and to meet the requirements of legislation such as the Food Act.

Each individual needs a tailor-made training programme and personal attention, and work placements help the students to find their place in the community.

Help for people with mental health needs, including learning disabilities, is provided at the Workbridge Centre in Northampton. The centre has been in existence since 1980 but its financial security was boosted in 1993 by an investment from St Andrews, a private charitable psychiatric hospital.

To make the most of the opportunity, the centre's staff was trained to extend the range of services by opening an office skills workshop. "Training in our industry is sadly lacking," says Laurence Holt, chairman of Quidam, an information technology consultancy. "The big companies hire music graduates and teach them outdated methods."

He is a long-time campaigner for higher standards and more disclosure in the information technology industry. Quidam hires computer graduates and arms them with techniques that are a blend of best practice theory and on-the-job experience over a number of years.

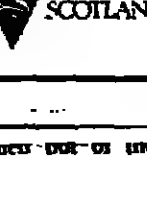
"We do radical things like giving everyone a credit card and telling them to buy any book they think will be useful," Mr Holt says. "The real prize is lower staff turnover than the rest of the industry and high customer satisfaction. We are doubling in size every other year and constantly taking on new technologies."

GREENWICH

Greenwich Caledonian is delighted to add the National Training Award for 1996 to its growing list of achievements.

The Award recognises Greenwich Caledonian's status as a 'model' training company, and enhances the organization's position as world leader in the field of aero-engine overhaul and repair.

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National Training Awards host Gillian Shephard tells Edward Fennell about the culture of creativity through education and training

Gillian Shephard, the Secretary of State for Education and Employment, is a fan of the National Training Awards. "Providing role models is a much better means of getting messages across than lecturing people," she says. — not least because of the media coverage the awards attract.

As an example of success through training, Mrs Shephard singles out Hedon Salads of Hull, whose new management succeeded in making a failed business highly profitable.

Hedon's revival was based on a training programme focused on National Vocational Qualifications. The previous management, by contrast, had paid no attention to training.

Similarly, Mrs Shephard cites impressive individuals such as Ms Jooley Roberts of Liverpool City Council, who won her award for the way in which she pursued a career and qualifications in construction while also being her family's main breadwinner.

What unites Hedon Salads and Ms Roberts, Mrs Shephard notes, is that both have taken full advantage of the available training facilities and mechanisms. She says: "The Government's role is to provide the infrastructure for the national training system, but individuals and organisations must then take responsibility for using it."

This view has been the consistent Conservative position since the mid-Eighties when Lord Young

presided, first at the old Manpower Services Commission, then at the Employment Department. He emphasised that more priority had to be given to training and vocational education. Mrs Shephard represents the culmination of the process started by Lord Young. As the first Secretary of State to combine the areas of both education and employment, she sends out the message that education is a preparation for employment; employment and training should be a continuation of education.

The consultative paper *Lifetime Learning*, published recently by the Department of Education and Employment (DfEE), comments: "Creating a culture of lifetime learning is crucial to sustaining and maintaining our international competitiveness. Technological change will

dominate the working lifetimes of those now in work and we must be in a position to adapt. At the individual level, our personal competitiveness will have a major effect on our prosperity."

One key result of this has been to

education system has become much more responsive to industry. Even university vice-chancellors now talk to their local industries.

"There is," Mrs Shephard says, "a new culture about, which is much envied by our counterparts in the European Community. I am now inundated by requests for interviews with foreign journalists — including from Germany — asking how we in Britain have managed to achieve these changes. Other countries would love to emulate us."

She points out that the changes are marked not just by educationists taking more interest in industry; those outside education are also keen to become involved in learning. In her constituency, for example, what is known as the Theford Learning Curve has recently brought together all sides of the community — and

Harvesting the rich rewards of our labours

6 In Britain we have managed to achieve changes other countries would love to emulate

not just educationists — to create a local network in which learning is made accessible to all.

One field in which there have been persistent problems, however, is youth training, where a succession of programmes — stretching right back to the Youth Opportunities Programme of the Seventies — have, in general, failed to win credibility either among employers or young people.

The establishment of the Modern Apprenticeship system in 1995 has gone some way towards meeting criticism that there was a vacuum in high-quality vocational training. Even so, a lot depends on the proposed launch this September of the new National Traineeships, which aim to offer training to those with modest educational attainments.

The general election will determine whether Mrs Shephard is still at the Department for Education and Employment to observe the lift-off of National Traineeships. But maybe the underlying problem, which she or her successor (of either party) may find hard to counter, is that, as recent surveys suggest, the British people still lack, recent surveys suggest, a real commitment to be well-educated.

Persuading people to change their indifference to learning is likely to be the key question for politicians, of whatever colour, who occupy the post of Secretary of State for Education and Employment in the next century.



Gillian Shephard says the NTA scheme undoubtedly works

Why we all need the right kind of support

Judging National Training Awards has become an annual date in the calendar for John Hougham of Acaas, the veteran chairman of the individual awards panel. Edward Fennell writes. But rather than seeing it as a chore he continues to be excited about the candidates he meets.

"In most cases it is a privilege to meet these people who often display astonishing personal qualities and have frequently had to overcome considerable odds to achieve their success," he says. "The stories they have to tell are impressive and we often end the judging process feeling awed by those we have seen."

This year there are 17 individual award winners. Mr Hougham feels he is now well positioned to judge some of the prerequisites for success. "From the individual point of view I think what really matters is partnership," he says. "Our winners are often excep-

tional people, but even they have mostly achieved their progress through partnership with others."

"Whether that be a spouse, a supportive employer, a trainer or a parent will depend on the individual circumstances, but rarely does change take place unaided."

The power of training, according to Mr Hougham, is that it can often transform people who start off with low self-esteem into those who bubble with confidence.

"As a result of having to contend with difficult conditions, these people have often emerged as more rounded characters. This can result in their lives being transformed as well. By being successful at work they achieve the confidence to be more active outside it. Their energy is sometimes astonishing."

This point was emphasised by Prince Leith, patron of this year's awards, who believes passionately in the need to

release the great potential which is locked up in most individuals. To free that potential is the great challenge.

"Work is an important part of life for most of us," she says. "The more we can grow at work and acquire new skills and responsibilities through training, the fuller we become as people and the more interesting lives we can lead. Training can be an enriching process for us in wider ways than just work."

This approach is central to the awards. As Mr Hougham points out, what the NTA judges are interested in is "the distance covered". The bright

young man who starts off with a double first from Oxbridge and an entrée to a merchant bank is unlikely to be the winner of an NTA award. But the person who has failed at school and found himself (or herself) in a dead end job is at a much better starting point. The need to get out of that dead end job is one of those critical

points in one's life at which, Mr Hougham believes, the future is cast. Accept the circumstances and nothing will ensue. Start planning how to escape and you are on the right track. "Finding the right kind of support at critical times is so vital. Those who are really successful also have the luck to get help when they need it most," he says.

Ensuring that there are facilities and assistance available to help individuals is, perhaps, one of the crucial roles for Training and Enterprise Councils (and LECs, their equivalent in Scotland).

Geoff Armstrong, the director-general of the Institute of Personnel and Development and chair of the corporate panel for NTAs, says: "What I am particularly pleased to see, through the National Training Awards, is the increasing closeness of co-operation between training providers and employers in building effective training programmes."



In charge John Hougham

Winning a National Training Award means prestige, better recruits, publicity and a certain amount of quiet satisfaction.



INDIVIDUAL WINNERS

Mrs Cherry Dickson, Magherafelt, Londonderry.
Mr Joseph Edwards, Belfast.
Mrs Sylvia Forster, Barnsley, South Yorkshire.
Ms Camilla Hall and Ms Margaret Easton, Elgin, Moray.
Mrs Lynne Hockney, Hull.
Mr Phillip Jackson, Nottingham.
Dr Charles Jowah, Portlithen, Aberdeenshire.
Mrs Kathleen Logue, Cloghan, Co Donegal.
Mr Steve McHale, West Yorkshire.
Mr Stephen Martin, Liverpool.
Ms Ruby Morgan, Lewisham, London.
Ms Sarah Ral, Derby.
Mr Stephen Raven, Wrexham.
Ms Jooley Roberts,



Liverpool.
Miss Penny Rushe, Brierley Hill, West Midlands.
Ms Irene Stevenson, Sheffield.
Mr Clive Tabiner, Leicester.

If you'd like to bask in the glory of winning a 1997 National Training Award, contact your local TEC/LEC. In England and Scotland, the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQs) in Wales and the Training and Employment Agency in Northern Ireland. You'll find their numbers in your local telephone directory right next to your competitors.

CBI

THE TIMES

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Department for Education and Employment

Training has motivated employees and helped to move companies from near disaster to prosperity throughout the British Isles

Safety, profits and helping youngsters

Increased productivity, motivation, safety and profitability are among the benefits of training, according to the Welsh winners of the National Training Awards, *Iola Smith writes*.

At Tower Colliery in the Cynon Valley, South Wales, the priority is safety. "If we can't produce coal safely, we don't produce it," Gary O'Brien, the training officer, says.

The pit was judged unviable by British Coal and was closed. But in 1994 the miners bought it and it became Europe's first worker-owned colliery. Tower then became the first colliery in Britain to become an NVQ examination centre, with 190 miners enrolling for a course to brush up on their skills.

All achieved NVQ standards and training is now directed towards new staff. For the first time in 15 years young people have been recruited to the mining industry in Wales. Tower's accident absenteeism rate has been reduced substantially since the buy-out, with a £500,000 saving on insurance.

BP Chemicals in Port Talbot decided in 1992 to structure its maintenance staff into multiskilled teams under a training scheme for which 295 people enrolled. Focusing on both classroom tuition and practical projects, it ensured that trainees were able to undertake the tasks expected.

"Some staff went on to obtain NVQs under the Chemical Industry Association

WALES

programme that we are piloting," Clive John, the training officer, says. "The remainder are thoroughly trained and now spend two periods a year undergoing either refresher courses or learning new skills." The course has resulted in fewer equipment breakdowns and increased productivity.

The other two winners in Wales, Parkway Hotel, Cwmbran, and the Princess Trust Volunteers are from the service sector. For Parkway, seeking AA four-star accreditation gave them the impetus to develop a training programme in 1994.

The course, which 90 staff joined, was customised to meet the needs of each department. According to Lisa Jay, general manager of the 70-bed hotel, the result was a significant improvement in standards and customer service. There were 61 per cent fewer complaints and a 27 per cent reduction in staff turnover.

The Prince's Trust Volunteers seeks to encourage young people between 16 and 25 into employment or further training by boosting their confidence and decision-making powers. The Pembroke branch trains 135 people a year towards a City and Guilds qualification and a Profile of Achievement. In 1995, 34 per cent then found employment.

SIMON TOWNSEND



Miners at Tower Colliery show their elation after buying it from British Coal



Greenwich Caledonian is now a leader in the aero-engine repair sector

Greater skills and better methods

Increased company profits and local environmental improvements are just two of the positive effects from Scottish training initiatives, *Victoria Walker writes*.

After its training programme resulted in rapid growth, the haulage firm United Freight Distribution Ltd enlarged its fleet from 28 to 40 trucks and made an annual saving of £64,000 in fuel costs.

Drivers receive tuition in their legal responsibilities and managing time and are trained in heavy-goods vehicle driving, deliveries and geography. Elizabeth MacDonald, Human Resource Manager, says: "We are now considering a training resource centre which will include materials on CD-ROM, videos and other open-learning packages."

Drumchapel Opportunities Ltd and Strathclyde Buses Ltd became National Training Award joint winners. Responding to the bus company's difficulty in recruiting drivers who held a passenger carrying vehicle (PCV) licence, Drumchapel Opportunities, a Glasgow charity, set up a project funded by the Glasgow Development Agency. It targets the long-term unemployed and offers a job for successful candidates. So far, 161 recruits have joined Strathclyde Buses.

The Ulster and Barra Training Programme is attempting to improve the prosperity of the Outer Hebridean Islands. The initiative, started in 1993,

offers 16 S/NVQs, ranging from tourism to childcare. To date, 108 people have attained a qualification.

Greenwich Caledonian has emerged as a leader in the aero-engine repair sector. A training programme developed to cut down costs and improve efficiency has resulted in a 25 per cent increase in sales. Team leaders and process managers were recruited to assist in teaching new skills and operational methods.

NTA winner, Wellview, (formerly WiseStart) was started in Lanarkshire in 1992 to teach construction industry skills to the long-term unemployed. Trainees have a 52-week contract and are paid a wage, receiving training and assessment up to a level 2 Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ). They also work on building projects. About 70 per cent of them have found full-time employment.

To alleviate the number of hours junior doctors work, the Queen Margaret Hospital NHS Trust decided some of the nursing staff could take over responsibility for routine tasks. Six medical support nurses underwent a ten-day training programme. Not only has this benefited the wards, it has also opened up new career possibilities and resulted in a national recognised qualification: the Diploma in Professional Studies 2.

SCOTLAND

Bakery hits right recipe for success

Disaster was looming for O'Hara's Bakeries in the early Nineties, says Maria Herron, marketing co-ordinator. It had problems with industrial relations and had to move to a new factory in Belfast to comply with environmental health regulations, *Amanda Loose writes*.

"We all had to pull together and decided the best way was to change the culture of the factory and improve communications. We started quarterly meetings where the managing director explains changes to the 328 staff," Ms Herron says.

"We also needed to improve efficiency and to comply with EC hygiene directives, so we introduced training in bakery techniques and have an in-house hygiene expert to train staff. Now 12 of the factory staff are doing a Scottish NVQ in craft bakery, while 11 managers of our 36 shops are doing NVQs in retailing."

St Mary's College in Londonderry also emphasises the importance of qualifications for life. An all-girls school with 1,000 pupils aged from 11 to 18 and a staff of 86, it began a training programme in 1990 for teachers, parents and support staff.

Geraldine Keegan, the headteacher, says: "We wanted to break the circle of low skills and unemployment in the area, and to involve the community in the school's development. Parent teaching assistants asked us for training to give them confidence to help with computing classes

NORTHERN IRELAND

and so on. Now about 90 people are being trained, including staff."

The Orchardville Society in Belfast was founded by parents in 1987 to provide vocational training for adults with severe learning difficulties. The Orchardville Business Centre opened in 1994 so trainees could receive computer and office training in an office environment. Trainees have the opportunity to gain RSA and NVQ qualifications and work experience in the public and private sectors.

Alan Thomson, from the award-winning business centre, says: "The trainees provide a desktop publishing service for about 20 regular customers, which goes some way to supporting the centre. It is also funded by several other organisations. The scheme is a stepping stone, reflecting a real change in attitudes to people with learning difficulties. They now have a chance to prove what they can do and how adaptable they are to new technology."

Barry McLean is campaign manager of Business in the Community, a programme which teaches the skills of the private sector to voluntary organisations. "We started 2½ years ago in response to demands from the voluntary sector for business expertise and wider experience," Mr McLean says.

CRISPIN RODMELL



NVQ training helped to pull O'Hara's Bakeries back from the brink of failure

ROS DRINKWATER ON THE 18 INDIVIDUALS WHO WERE JUDGED WINNERS

Bridging the gap between earning a living and enjoying the fruits of a worthwhile career is the achievement of this year's individual winners of the National Training Awards, 11 women and seven men, who demonstrate the rewards of commitment to training.

Cherry Dickson describes her most pleasurable experience as "witnessing women reach their full potential in education and employment, having overcome many barriers on the way." After 20 years as a farmer's wife and mother of four, Mrs Dickson decided to spend a year training and accepted the post of women's officer at her local Action for Community Employment project.

To date her qualifications include an RSA Stage 1 in computing, a certificate in counselling and a diploma in community development practice. She is now a respected community leader helping other women to run community-based groups, applying her skills to the everyday problems facing people in Northern Ireland.

In 1991 when wife and mother Lynne Hoekney took

an evening class in car maintenance in an effort to help her husband's taxi cab business she had no idea of the impact it would have on her life. Working for Hedon Salads, in a traditionally male-dominated industry, her prospects for promotion were slim, but the evening class whetted her appetite for further advancement.

She embarked on a series of training courses including health and safety, food hygiene, first aid and an NVQ Level 2 in Intensive Crop Production. In 1994 she was appointed Glasshouse Foreman and within a year her block had become top producer on the nursery.

Kathleen Logue was a machinist who achieved high standards of output and quality. This was the springboard that set her on a career path that would lead from shop floor to senior management.

Recognising her own potential, she applied for the position of training instructor, a job that became the key to her success. Today her leadership qualities are highly respected.

As general manager with Naturelle Consumer Products, Mrs Logue has helped the

company to gain ISO 9002 accreditation and a certification mark for the industrial coverage range of products. The local community has benefited through her creation of jobs and the introduction of men into traditionally female occupations.

When he left school at 18 Philip Jackson was an underachiever with a speech impediment. Today he is an accomplished public speaker with a demanding position as a nursing-home consultant responsible for training 80 employees. He has set up NVQ assessment centres in retail and hairdressing. Sixty per cent of his staff have achieved, or are working towards, an NVQ in Care and he is steering the group towards an Investors in People Award.

Mr Jackson's goal has been constant: to develop his own skills to enable him to help others to realise their potential.

"To see individuals gain in confidence and self-esteem is a joy, and to be involved as they develop and progress is wonderful," he says. "It allows me to repay the people who have faith in me."

Sylvia Forster had to abandon

her academic ambitions early on in order to help support her widowed mother. Only when her own children began school did she embark on her nursing career, working as a part-time nursing auxiliary.

She then trained as a State Enrolled Nurse specialising in care for the elderly and after five years moved to the private sector as a residential care manager.

Further training in management skills enabled her to convert to Registered General Nurse and five months after qualifying she was appointed matron of the Springfield Care Cottages Nursing Home. She then studied for an HNC in Social Care, took an NVQ assessor course and qualified for D32 and D33.

She was then able to start NVQ training with her staff, and in addition to her responsibilities as matron, now teaches NVQ standards part-time at her local college.

Theoretical knowledge dovetailing with vocational and practical skills is the key to success in business," says Stephen Raven, summing up his business philosophy. He owns ASSIST Creative Resources, a multimedia communications business, with a growing list of prestigious corporate clients.

Mr Raven attributes his success to his commitment to education and training. He left school with poor English skills, but despite this he gained a degree in physical education, a postgraduate certificate in education and became a lecturer in physical education.

Along the path from education to business Mr Raven taught himself multimedia authoring, desktop publishing and graphic design skills and gained an Open University MA by obtaining the NVQ assessor qualification D32 and D33.

In 1992 he set up his own company, and in 1994 ASSIST Health and Fitness won an NTA. It was the launch pad for the formation of his present company.

Despite having to care for her younger sister and disabled father, Jooley Roberts left school with six GCSE passes. She applied for a job as an apprentice in all trades at Liverpool City Council and was employed as an apprentice carpenter and joiner on a three-year, college-based course. She thrived in the job, achieving NVQ Levels 1, 2 and 3 in carpentry and joinery. In 1993, with her eye on a position



in management, she began studies for an Ordinary National Certificate in Building Construction and will complete her training this year.

It was an evening class in A-level history that set hospital porter Steve McHale on a path to continuous learning. Not only did the class boost his confidence, it transformed his career aspirations.

Mr McHale enrolled on the Registered Mental Nurse training course at Wakefield College, gained a teaching qualification and went on to study for a BA (Hons) Degree in Combined Studies. He feels his training has brought him enormous personal benefits.

"The degree broadened my thinking and deepened my analytical skills," he says. "It also taught me research techniques that are more important in nursing."

From childhood Penny Rusken's ambition was to work as a cook. After her first job as cook to an Admiral, she spent four years in the Army and worked as a Post Office catering manager.

Having joined Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council Catering Services as a trainee manager, she studied for the Institute of Personnel Development qualification and today, as general manager, runs a business with a turnover in excess of £5 million, overseeing 700 staff who provide 20,000 meals every day.

Ms Rusken's efforts have saved the company more than £30,000 with no interruption to service or quality and she has also contributed to Dudley MBC being recognised as an Investor in People.

In eight years Joseph Edwards has progressed from a job as a labourer with Dorna Old Bleach factory of Randalstown, County Antrim, to playing a pivotal role in the success of the company.

Today, he is responsible for

the training and development of 240 people. Taking at least two courses a year, Mr Edwards has qualified in planning, finance, personal computing, programme design and as an adult literacy tutor. He has gained a professional diploma in management and is well on his way to a Master of Science degree.

It was with the goal of becoming a teacher that Charles Juwah graduated from Nigeria's University of Maiduguri with a degree in Agricultural Science. Now a science course leader at Aberdeen College, he has an impressive list of qualifications including a Bachelor's and a Master's degree and a doctorate.

Dr Juwah is wholly committed to the principal of continuous development. "I have become more aware of the need for lifetime learning," he says, "and the requirement to keep abreast of new knowledge and changes in my professional practices."

In 15 years Sarah Rai has progressed from her general nurse training to a managerial position and is consultant nurse of three nursing and residential care homes. As a result of her vision and commitment, Rushcliffe Nursing Home won a Business Enterprise Award in 1992.

Feeling that his career options were limited by his lack of qualifications, Clive Taberner enrolled on a three-year HND course in Rural Resource Management with the aim of working towards a career in countryside, leisure and tourism. "It was at Seale Hayne College in Devon that I really learnt to read books and journals effectively," he says.

Soon after leaving college he became assistant farm manager at Farmworld near Leicester and in 1992 was promoted to the position of farm manager. Aware of the need to deliver top quality customer service, Mr Taberner decided that the Investors in People programme was ideal to develop his small staff team.

A sufferer from ME for five years, Irene Stevenson has nevertheless achieved her ambition of a BSc Degree and a teaching post in further education. In addition, she has taken an HNC in computer studies, a postgraduate diploma in management studies and is working towards an MBA and a certificate in education.

Made redundant in 1994, she took work as a part-time lecturer at Sheffield Hallam University and in 1995 was offered her present full-time

position at Deane Valley College. A bonus is that her job involves working with people made redundant due to the closure of the mining industry in the region. "Helping them towards new jobs is immensely rewarding," she says.

In his 18 years with Interface Europe Ltd, Stephen Martin has risen to a management role with responsibility for health and safety, technical and management services, plus quality and environmental matters.

His steady career progression has been underpinned by gaining a Master's degree in management, a remarkable achievement for someone whose school career lacked distinction. Several of Mr Martin's many qualifications have been translated into business initiatives in which he has worked with colleagues to gain commitment to a new system or policy.

After a series of temporary jobs Ruby Morgan realised that the positions that suited her best were those which involved contact with the public. As housing assistant with the London Borough of Lewisham she attended in-house vocational training courses and had two promotions in rapid succession.

Her next step was to attend

a four-year, day release placement, gaining both the BTEC National Certificate and the Higher National Certificate in housing studies.

In 1994 when Lewisham introduced NVQs, Ms Morgan trained as an assessor and in 1995 qualified for the role of internal verifier within the council. Among her achievements is her development of a quality customer services programme.

Camilla Hall and Margaret Easton, who share a joint award, are both experienced nurses, working in psychiatric care and within the field of long-stay care of the elderly for Moray Health Services Trust. They believed that some of the falls suffered by the patients could be prevented, and trained themselves in clinical audit techniques by taking an open learning course through the University of Dundee.

Thus armed, they devised a fall prevention policy involving alarm systems, concentrating staff levels at high risk times and identifying high risk patients. The result was a drop in the number of falls in the study ward from 21 to six for an equivalent period, and the two nurses have now disseminated their findings to a worldwide audience.



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THE TIMES THURSDAY FEBRUARY 13 1997

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NORTHERN IRELAND



FILM 1

The Prince and I: Branagh stays faithful to the text, but swamps *Hamlet* in gloss and stars.



FILM 2

Fierce Creatures reunites the cast of *A Fish Called Wanda* for a broad farce set in a zoo.

THE TIMES ARTS



FILM 3

Attenborough's charming but dull *In Love and War* tells the story of Hemingway's wartime romance.



FILM 4

Steve Buscemi turns director to take a wry look at small-town America in *Trees Lounge*.

CINEMA: Geoff Brown stands back as Branagh unleashes his all-star, full-length *Hamlet* at modern groundlings

Ken's lust action hero

Tomorrow, St Valentine's Day, brings us songs of love from the likes of Richard Attenborough and *The Brothers McMullen*. There are also new films from Kenneth Branagh and John Cleese. Who said love was dead? Who, indeed, said Shakespeare was dead?

Branagh does not think so, although the most striking aspect of his plush, four-hour *Hamlet* is the effort he makes to convince young audiences that the Bard is worth the popcorn, the slippy drink, and the other accoutrements of a night at the movies in 1997.

As adapter and director, Branagh seems terrified that the Elizabethan language might sail over heads. Every line — and this is the complete play — is enunciated with the kind of clarity suited to people hard of hearing. And if the text offers a chance for an illustrative glimpse or flashback, Branagh leaps in. So here are *Hamlet* and Ophelia (Branagh and Kate Winslet) making love; over there, young Ham makes merry with Yorick (Ken Dodd, very daft) and Ophelia paces her padded cell. It's all rather exhausting.

Branagh also pumps for massive visual decoration. He shoots in 70mm, each image crisp as frost on a windowpane. He shifts the play to the late 19th century, when pomp still held sway, monarchies still ruled, and characters could wear a dazzling wardrobe of checkered jackets, brocade and gold tassels. Elsinore is recreated as a vast and brooding winter palace. The exterior is actually Blenheim, dressed in tons of artificial snow; the interior State Hall is a black-and-white chessboard ringed by galleries, stairways and balustrades. It could almost be the set for an MGM musical.

The casting, too, is meant to dazzle. The chief parts may be in stalwart hands (Derek Jacobi as Claudius, Richard Briers as Polonius, Julie Christie as Gertrude), but the smaller parts are enlivened or ruined by all manner of men. Robin Williams makes something out of the courtier Ose-

Hamlet
Curzon Mayfair
PG, 242 mins
Branagh's Shakespeare for the masses

Fierce Creatures
Empire, PG, 93 mins
Broad farce from John Cleese

In Love and War
Warner West End
15, 115 mins
Soggy romance from Richard Attenborough

She's the One
ABC Tottenham Court Road, 15, 97 min
Amiable but slight romantic comedy

Trees Lounge
Virgin Haymarket
15, 95 mins
Diary of a Long Island nobody

than any other of his Shakespeare forays. The camera often adopts the full-frontal position, catching performances in long takes, although the scene with Charlton Heston's Player King benefits from edgy shots of watching faces.

And so the film advances, richly caparisoned, subtly mostly banished, the lines thumped home for all to hear. As you emerge, blinking, from four hours in the dark, you may feel tired and bludgeoned, but you cannot ever accuse Branagh of failing to achieve his goal: the complete

Hamlet, decked in baubles for the multiplexes.

If there was room in *Hamlet* for Dodd, Williams, Crystal and company, where, you might think, was John Cleese? Too busy tinkering with *Fierce Creatures*, his long-awaited companion to *A Fish Called Wanda*. Shooting was completed in 1995. Reactions of preview audiences persuaded Cleese to rewrite the final third, but a year had to pass before his *Wanda* co-stars, Kevin Kline, Jamie Lee Curtis and Michael Palin, were free to return to the project. Robert Young, the original director, was never able to return, so Fred Schepisi filled the breach for the reshoot.

For all the protracted gestation, the film seems all of a piece: a farce set in an English zoo, that telegraphs its jokes in advance but still allows laughter of sorts to flourish. None of the characters from *Wanda* surfaces, but there is the same delight in ribbing the British Establishment, indulging in sexual comedy and wooing American audiences. Cleese's character is Rollo Lee, newly appointed director of a zoo recently acquired by an Australian multi-media mogul (one of Kline's dual roles).

In order to indicate the mogul's vulgarity, Cleese and his co-writer Iain Johnston let the man rip with farts and belches. Luckily, greater subtlety goes into other parts of the script, like the zoo's "fierce animal policy", designed to beef up box-office takings, but difficult to achieve with creatures such as leopards.

But *Fierce Creatures* relies mostly on Cleese's squawks and bluster, on dropped pants and raised eyebrows, plus broad satire on marketing strategies, sponsorship deals and other signs of the times. *Creatures* is not as funny as *Wanda*, itself an overrated film, but it gets by.

One of the very last diversions of *Hamlet* is the sight of Richard Attenborough as the English Ambassador who arrives with the redundant news that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead. All in a day's work for Attenborough,

of course, who has spent most of his recent time filming *In Love and War* at Shepperton studios and a fetching group of Italian locations. Italy's job was to provide the backdrop for the love that ignited, flickered and faded between an ambulance driver called Ernest Hemingway and a nurse named Agnes von Kurowsky in the summer of 1918.

Compared to Attenborough's other biographical dramas, this romance does not attempt to plumb the depths, although he still aims for a spectacle throbbing with size and importance. As the stars, Sandra Bullock and Chris O'Donnell, perform their hesitation waltz, one thinks as times of Ryan's Daughter, another small story writ too large. Bullock's easy charm and no-nonsense air suit the nurse, while O'Donnell's boyish vitality comes in useful for the future author of *A Farewell to Arms* (Hemingway's fiction-

al response to the affair). But they never seem other than movie figures, gliding through an undernourished film.

She's the One, Edward Burns's follow-up to the independent hit, *The Brothers McMullen*, is more of the same, only on a bigger budget. Burns himself plays Mickey, "the only English-speaking white guy driving a cab in New York". He becomes involved with, and marries, a

fare named Hope (Maxine Bahns). Meanwhile, Mike McGloone, another *Brothers McMullen* alumnus, is cheating on his wife Rene (Jennifer Aniston, from *Friends*) with Heather (Cameron Diaz), Mickey's dream woman turned monster. Confused? Not for long: Burns takes great care to keep things clear in this pleasant enough, but hardly taxing, romantic comedy.

Even quieter pleasures are offered by *Trees Lounge*, the first feature directed by actor Steve Buscemi, pop-eyed tall-man of American independent movies. As so often with first endeavours, he has dug into his own past to spin the sad-funny story of Tommy Basilio (played by Buscemi himself, who else?), a barfly and out-of-work mechanic who finds salvation of sorts driving his late uncle's ice-cream truck

through the dull streets of Valley Stream, Long Island. This is Buscemi's home town, and the film's sense of place is a major asset.

Another is its generous response to all manner of humans, from Buscemi's funny, petulant loser to the older fixtures propping up the bar, and the 17-year-old girl, winningly played by Chloe Sevigny, who complicates the hero's life.



"It is more of a piece than any other of his Shakespeare forays": Kenneth Branagh with Kate Winslet in his occasionally exhausting *Hamlet*

7 ACADEMY AWARD NOMINATIONS

INCLUDING
BEST FILM, BEST DIRECTOR, BEST ACTOR & BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR

"COMPELLING"
Sunday Telegraph

"MARVELLOUS"
Cherwell

"EXTRAORDINARY"
Time Out

"WINNER"
GOLDEN GLOBE AWARD
BEST ACTOR
GEOFFREY BUSH

"TRIUMPHANT"
Daily Express

"EXCELLENT"
The Times

"BREATHTAKING"
Daily Mail

NOMINATED FOR
DIRECTORS GUILD OF AMERICA
DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR
GEOFFREY BUSH

Shine

STARTS TOMORROW **Lumière**

NOW SHOWING

ENDS TODAY

CURZON MAYFAIR

SNAP VERDICT

'Intensely moving'

Every week, young film fans discuss the latest releases...

□ HAMLET
Damian Samuels, 19: A startling cinematic experience, well told and directed. Matt Jones, 20: Kenneth Branagh gets fantastic performances from his star-studded cast. It looks magnificent and rarely lags.

Tim Thornton, 21: Intensely moving: the scenes between Hamlet and Horatio packed real emotional punch. Only the most pretentious of Shakespeare buffs are likely to find fault with this.

Nigel Wrayall, 18: The almost definitive version, with no poor performances.

□ SHE'S THE ONE
Damian: A pretty cast provides few laughs in a pretty mundane comedy. Matt: Diverting but ultimately empty.

Tim: A good, old-fashioned turn-off-your-brain romantic comedy.

Nigel: An endearing story with strong characters.

□ FIERCE CREATURES
Damian: Tamer than *Wanda*, this bawdy comedy has perfectly timed set-pieces that are the work of an excellent team. Matt: Far superior to most recent comedies.

Tim: Cleese & Co have made the best *Carry On* film ever: slick, sexy and superb.

Nigel: Slapstick at its very best.

DAVID JENKINS
MAXINE BAHNS
EDWARD BURNS
CAMERON DIAZ
JOHN MAMONEY
MIKE MCGLOONE

A film about love, marriage, happiness... and the little distractions in between.

she's the one

"fab and funny"
NINETEEN

"highly entertaining"
NOT PRESS

"delicious"
MAXIM

"terrific"
ESQUIRE

"a charmingly intelligent comedy"
BARRY NORMAN-FILM 97

"a gentle, witty, perceptive film"
THE LIST

A New Film From The Director of 'The Brothers McMullen'

STARTS TOMORROW AT CINEMAS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

CHOICE 1

Jane Asher heads the cast of Doug Lucie's new play, *The Shallow End*

VENUE: Now in preview at the Duke of York's

CHOICE 2

... while Kate O'Mara directs and stars in a new *Twelfth Night*

VENUE: Opens tonight, Haymarket, Basingstoke

CHOICE 3

The Royal Ballet stages Twyla Tharp's *Push Comes to Shove*

VENUE: Opens tonight at the Royal Opera House

NEW VIDEOS

Adolescent love in *Boys*, plus Cary Grant and Burt Lancaster in two classics from the Fifties

Uneasy Ryder loses her balance



Winona Ryder stars in Stacy Cochran's *Boys*, a worthy effort let down by its script and its gloomy images

NEW ON VIDEO

BOYS
PolyGram, 15, 1996
WINONA RYDER, a distressed damsel with an air of mystery, finds a knight in shining armour in Lukas Haas, a disaffected high-school student. It is clear enough what director Stacy Cochran wants in this singular title film: a study of two lives in the balance, steering each other redemption. But an inadequate script, fuzzy characters and gloomy images get in the way. Available to rent.

AN AFFAIR TO REMEMBER
Fox, 15, 1957
LEO McCAREY's glutinous comedy romance might have been left slumbering, had not *Sleepless in Seattle* brought it back into the public arena by making such a point of its plot. Cary Grant and Deborah Kerr fall in love, only to be dealt a bad hand by fate.

THE CABLE GUY
Columbia TriStar, 12, 1996
JIM CARREY's screen personality has always bordered on the obnoxious, but this grueling, ambitious comedy pushes him way over the edge. He is a cable TV technician with a need to bond with his customers. Matthew Broderick bears the brunt as the film becomes swamped by hard-headed mayhem and rudery. Director, Ben Stiller. Available to rent.

MOONLIGHT AND VALENTINO
PolyGram, 15, 1996
NOTHING to do with the silent star of

the fashion designer: this Valentino is a dog, who accompanies a house painter (Jon Bon Jovi) on his travels. But the people who matter are the women: the grieving widow (Elizabeth Perkins), the neurotic sister (Gwyneth Paltrow), the kooky best friend (Whoopi Goldberg). They cluster round, thrashing

our thoughts in a sensitive film. Written by Ellen Simon, daughter of Neil. Available to rent.

APACHE
Warner, PG, 1954
BURT LANCASTER got out the warpaint for this exciting and intelligent Western about the one-man war waged by a native brave against the US Cavalry. Taut, vigorous direction by Robert Aldrich; Charles Bronson pops up under his real surname, Buchinsky.

GEOFF BROWN

NEW CLASSICAL CDs: Late Schubert; Donizetti's Oxford opera; the pleasures of Pfitzner

CHAMBER

Hilary Finch

SCHUBERT/BOCCERINI
String Quartets
Soprano, Laredo, Ma. etc.
Sony SK 53963 (15.49)

ISAAC STERN leads a group of young musicians in a new recording of the great C major Quintet. Schubert wrote two months before his death. It is a tempting proposition, but beware. The aim of these players seems to be to give the Quintet a robust physical presence: the result is disappointingly crude and earthbound.

The Borodin Quartet (Teld, 1994) and, indeed, Stern in his young prime in the classic 1952 recording with Tortelier and Casals show that this can be done without de-spiritualising the work. Here, his passion is marred by a sense of heavy-handed effort; his lyrical, meditative passages seem merely weary and valedictory. The balance of voices in the great slow movement is

just not fine enough to catch the breath and suspend time itself.

The Boccherini Quintet (Op 13, No 5), with its famous Minuet, comes as something of a relief, and the players are at last free to enjoy themselves unreservedly.

OPERA

John Higgins

DONIZETTI
Rosmonda d'Inghilterra
Fleming/Miricic/Montague/Ford/Miles/Philharmonia/Parrish
Opera Rara ORC 329
(2 CDs) £32.99

Never anyone bold enough to stage it, *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra* could be known as Donizetti's Oxford opera. Rosmonda, mistress of Enrico (King Henry III), is sequestered in a remote corner of Woodstock Park, where all the action takes place. His wife Leonora (Eleanor of Aquitaine) eventually confronts and kills her, an adjustment of

history, as the real Rosmonda ended her days more peacefully in the nearby nunnery of Godstow.

Opera Rara makes a compelling case for a neglected work by securing two of America's best young singers for the roles of the King and the lady he would have as his next Queen. Renée Fleming is in cracking form as Rosmonda, who gets extended arias in both acts, showing off her coloratura and singing with a sweetness that makes it quite understandable that Enrico should want her as his next wife. Bruce Ford is not always well favoured by the recording but still manages plenty of vocal heroics and has the clean attack Donizetti demanded from his tenors.

Nelly Miricic sounds worn in Act 1, a worried Leonora, but handles her des-

ing aria of remorse in style. Perhaps she was the one who retired to Godstow. Good support from Alastair Miles, revealed mid-opera as Rosmonda's papa, and from Diana Montague as the page who loves her even more than Enrico does. The vigour of David Parry's conducting helps to conceal the fact that parts of the work verge on the formulaic.

CDs reviewed in The Times can be ordered from the Times Music Shop on 0345-023 498

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Barry Millington

PFTZNER/STRAUSS
Preludes from Palestrina etc
Orchestra of the Deutsche Oper, Berlin/Thielemann
DG 440 571 24*** £15.49

PFTZNER's legendary opera *Palestrina* has had a somewhat cool reception at Covent Garden, though it is undoubtedly one of the major works of the century.

If you are deterred by the prospect of four and half hours in the theatre, or simply cannot afford it, you can at

least get a very good idea of the composer's sound-world from this disc.

The preludes to the three acts of *Palestrina* are conducted with all the skill, sympathy and interpretative insight that Christian Thielemann brings to bear at the Royal Opera too, though the orchestra is that of the Deutsche Oper, Berlin (the clarinet solo in the third act prelude is just as ravishing).

Also included are a short extract from a later Pfitzner opera, *Das Herz*, and the overture from his incidental music to Kleist's play, *Das Käthchen von Heilbrunn*.

Some listeners may find the warm humanity of Richard Strauss rather more engaging — and the ripe Romanticism of his early *Gipsy* overture is a welcome choice here, as is the love scene from the equally neglected *Fernsehst* — yet Pfitzner certainly speaks with an unmistakably individual voice.

★ Worth hearing
★★ Worth considering
★★★ Worth buying

LONDON

THE SHALLOW END Doug Lucie's new play, directed by Robert Liddell, centres the scenes at a street wedding a media mogul's high-profile marriage to Jane Asher and Tony Doyle. Royal Court Theatre (Duke of York's), St Martin's Lane, WC2 (0171-353 5520). Preview begins today. 7.30pm. Opens Feb 17, 7pm. Then Mon-Sat 7.30pm; mat 3.30pm.

ROYAL BALLET Returns only for the season's first Main Programme, which includes David Bintley's *Concerto Lescaze*, Kenneth MacMillan's *The Judas Tree* and Twyla Tharp's *Push Comes to Shove*. Performances also on February 16, 25, 26, May 7, 8 and 12. Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, WC2 (0171-304 4000). Tonight, 7.30pm.

SEVEN BRIDES FOR SEVEN BROTHERS An out-and-out score and a beautiful choreography combine in the musical tale of hardy settlers, adding whose idea of romance is to kidnap their prospective wives. Broadway, High Street, Covent Garden, WC2 (0171-304 4000). Tonight, 7.30pm. Mon-Fri 7.45pm; mat 3.30pm. Then Sat 8.30pm. Sun 2.30pm.

ELSEWHERE BASINGSTOKE Kate O'Mara directs and stars in *Twelfth Night*.

TODAY'S CHOICE

A daily guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Gillian Mazzy

This production of Shakespeare's lyrical tale of romantic love and mistaken identity marks the revival of the British Action Theatre Company.

ELUSHOW Conductors Carlo Virsik leads the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, as part of the orchestra's 50th anniversary celebrations, in a performance of the 19th-century Scottish composer James MacMillan's *Tuathaich*, while Benet's *Sinfonia da Requiem* celebrates the programme.

HENRIE HEMPTSTADT Mrs. Hemmestadt follows her shopping and F*** with a radical reworking of *Twelfth Night* as a journey of pleasure and pleasure across modern America. Nicky Paterson directs Alan Poulter and Peter Balle in a multi-media piece for Action Theatre.

HOUSE OF Jeremy Kingston's assessment of theatre showing in London

House of, returns only

Some seats available

Seats at all prices

THEATRE GUIDE

Jeremy Kingston's assessment of theatre showing in London

House of, returns only

Some seats available

Seats at all prices

production of Miller's drama

Heathcliff, Citi Richard

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NEW RELEASES

FLY AWAY HOME Endorsing tale of orphaned Canadian geese, with Anne Paquin and Jeff Goldblum. Columbia Pictures Home Video (0171-499 3320). Overseas: Kinema (0181-315 4214). MCA Home Video (0171-737 2121). UCI Video (0171-353 5520). Warner (0171-437 4343).

THE GIRL, FRIDAY (R) Hard-boiled noir comedy, vintage 1940s, with Cary Grant and Rosalind Wiseman. Director: Howard Hawks. Columbia Pictures (0171-353 5520).

THE PROPRIETOR (12) French writer returns home to his native Marseille. Lucien, with Jeanne Moreau. MCA Home Video (0171-737 2121). UCI Video (0171-353 5520). Warner (0171-437 4343).

INDULGE (16) Penny Lane's witty comedy about a man in a suit, with Penny Lane, Alan Rickman, and others. Columbia Pictures Home Video (0171-499 3320). Overseas: Kinema (0181-315 4214). MCA Home Video (0171-737 2121). UCI Video (0171-353 5520). Warner (0171-437 4343).

WHITE MAN'S BURDEN (15) Underdog John Travolta drama about

CINEMA GUIDE

David Brown's assessment of films in London and overseas. Indicated with the symbol () on release across the country

from his employer, Henry Baskerville. Fine production of an extraordinary painter, Director: Desmond Davis. Columbia Pictures Home Video (0171-499 3320).

CURRENT

BITVA (PG) Madonna sings with passion, but production overplays her with Lloyd Webber's rock opera. ABC Family Video (0171-499 3320).

WHITNEY (PG) Madonna sings with passion, but production overplays her with Lloyd Webber's rock opera. ABC Family Video (0171-499 3320).

EXTREME MEASURES (15) Dashing doctor Hugh Grant stumbles on a medical mystery in New York. ABC Family Video (0171-499 3320).

WITNESS (PG) Hugh Grant stumbles on a medical mystery in New York. ABC Family Video (0171-499 3320).

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ART GALLERIES

GREAT LANDSCAPES FROM 17th to 19th centuries. ROYAL MUSEUM, 21, Piccadilly, London W1A 1AA. Tel: 0171 353 5520.

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CINEMA

El Mariachi, made for \$7,000, is the inspiration for a *Times* film-makers' competition



THEATRE 1

Eric Sykes and Peter Bowles are superb in Peter Hall's staging of Molière's *The School for Wives*

THE TIMES ARTS



THEATRE 2

Shakuntala, at the Gate, is a brave but flawed attempt to revive an epic from 2,000 years ago



TOMORROW

They're back, they're mean — and they're clean: how Aerosmith found a way to survive

Geoff Brown on the pleasures and challenges that await the winner of a new Arriflex 16SR 3

A piece of the light camera action

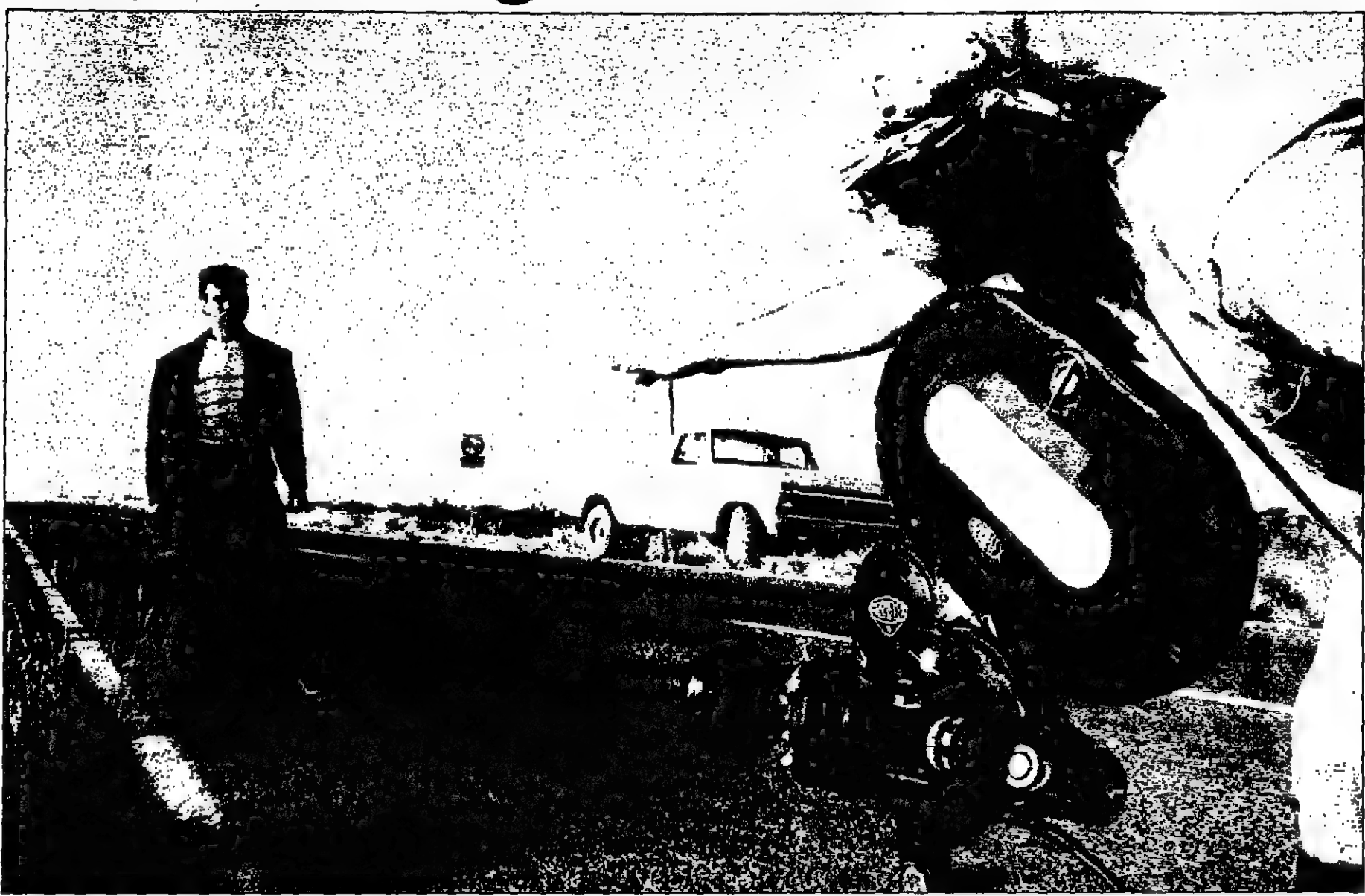
Almost everybody, it seems, wants to make a movie. Bookshops fill entire shelves with how-to books about scriptwriting and film production. Fashionable universities offer courses and workshops: the current *Sight and Sound* magazine offers fine advertisements from institutions in Britain and North America, dangling the prospect of becoming the next discovery at the Sundance Film Festival, or — why not? — Cannes itself.

The *Times* is doing its part, too, by today launching a competition offering as the top prize a key weapon in the film-maker's armoury: an Arriflex 16SR 3 camera. This is the kind of handheld equipment that Robert Rodriguez used to make *El Mariachi*, which cost \$7,000 to make, and shot Rodriguez from nowhere into the front line of American independent directors.

If ever dreams came true, they did for Rodriguez — and ahead of schedule. Recalling his 27th birthday in his amusing book about his *Mariachi* adventures, *Rebel Without a Crew*, he writes: "Orson Welles made *Citizen Kane* when he was 25. Spielberg made *Jaws* at 25. So I've only got about two or three years to make my breakthrough film."

This was not always so. When studios ruled, both in Hollywood and elsewhere, film-makers were expected to take time to mature. They worked behind the scenes, as editors, writers or cinematographers. They learnt on the job directing fodder: low-budget westerns, supporting shorts. John Huston was 35 when he made his first film, *The Maltese Falcon*. Fred Zinnemann, the director of *High Noon*, only got into his stride in his forties, after years of shorts or desperate films like *My Brother Talks to Horses*.

But without the support system of studios or television, aspiring film-makers are forced to be mavericks, whether or not they have Welles's talent. They work up their script, which may be conceived as an anguished personal statement or, as with Rodriguez, a first step towards commercial respectability. They finance their project through their day jobs, loans from friends or family, or their credit cards. Shooting takes place in an improvised frenzy; post-production scarcely exists. They submit their film to a festival, if possible Sundance, nurtured by Robert Redford: the preferred launching pad for any new American talent, especially after Steven Soderbergh's *sex, lies, and videotape* catapulted the 26-year-old director towards the Palme d'Or at Cannes.



Robert Rodriguez, with the Arriflex camera that helped him to make a big-time career from a chicken-feed budget, directs Carlos Gallardo in a scene from *El Mariachi*

The maverick method has virtues and vices. The studio's embrace can give your film a professional sheen, and a screenplay hauled by the best script doctors in the land. It can also sap your project of any individuality. On the other hand, if you go it alone with a handful of friends and a shoestring budget, you have no one but yourself to slap your ideas into shape. First-time makers often have difficulty separating wheat from chaff, especially if the subject-matter is personal.

But the maverick's shoestring also inspires inventive film-making of a kind rarely known by an established director smothered in money. Your available set is too poky for words, so it's up to you to expand the unexpandable through camera an-

gles or crafty editing. Generous budgets and the marching army of computer-generated effects have robbed film-makers of the ability to suggest. Everything is laid out before us, whether it be a swirling tornado or a spaceship the size of a football stadium. But, with humble resources, you can invite audiences to use their imagination. Not for

nothing has the lighting of German Expressionist films influenced so many low-budget thrillers and experimental ventures. Shadows are wonderful for obscuring blank walls.

The low-budget beginner can also blaze new paths, away from commercial fashions and formulae. Sadly, however, so few do. Each

year, festivals get clogged with imitation Tarantino, or kindergarten Woody Allen movies. One dubious item is coming our way in two weeks' time. *Bound*, the credits announce, is "written and directed by the Wachowski Brothers". Determined to get noticed, Larry and Andy Wachowski lacquer the screen with designer violence, and place two sultry lesbians at the head of a glibby, standard gangster story. Result: the year's most hollow screen achievement.

Luckily, others have better ambitions. With no film school training at all, Britain's Shane Meadows took a camera on to the streets of his home town, Nottingham, to make *Small Time*, 60 minutes of mordant fun observing the foibles of thieves

and layabouts who will steal anything not nailed down. The film is fresh, rude, close to life, and it cost all of £5,000: the perfect tonic for anyone tired of watching Helena Bonham Carter cavort in crinoline in yet another heritage drama.

"I was lied to about films and how to make them," Meadows has said. "I suffered at the hands of the failed film-maker. Only when I started making them for my own reasons and in my own style did anyone take any notice of me."

My own reasons: my own style. These are the crucial elements in making a first movie worth the heartache, poverty and sweat, and making the end product worth a paying audience's attention. Go to it.

CALLING ALL MOVIEMAKERS

For details of the movie competition to win the £56,000 Arriflex camera and how you can enter, see page 32

THEATRE: Marvellous Molière brings out the tragi-comic best in its cast. Plus an uneven Indian epic of nymphs and demons



Peter Bowles as Arnolphe in *The School for Wives* with Eric Sykes and Daniel Betts

A touch of epic ennui

The tales of the *Mahabharata* do not appeal to all tastes, and I am one who finds quickly resistible those mighty battles and constant orders to young people to believe their elders know better. What we currently have at the Gate is a play derived from that epic by a poet named Kalidasa some two thousand years ago, and now translated by Peter Oswald, author of the National's recent *Fair Ladies at a Game of Poem Cards*.

That time Japan, this time India where King Dushshanta falls in love with the daughter of a heavenly nymph. They marry, he returns to his court but, before she can follow him, a demon curses her for being slow to open the door of her courtyard to his demands. A sexual subtext can be pictured

Shakuntala Gate

here, though the play runs smoothly over it. Nevertheless, the curse operates on the king's memory, causing him to forget he ever married the lovely Shakuntala, and the happy end is not reached until she has been snatched up into the sky, a missing ring found in the belly of a carp, and the king rides in the chariot of the gods to defeat an army of demons against whom Indra is powerless.

The play offers intriguing problems of staging, some of which are neatly solved in Indhu Rubasingham's production. Gods gaze down through rippling clouds at the

earth far below, and the first entry of the king (Silas Carson) on his own chariot is excellent. But much of the evening passes slowly, even though the scenes come hurtling after each other with sections of the story oddly left undramatised, perhaps to preserve a sense of the original epic style.

Oswald employs a language that uses the vocabulary of poetry without its grammar, imparting a sense of being suffocated under artificial blossoms. The quality of performance varies. Carson finds a fitting blend of hauteur and concern, and Will Keen is effective in several roles. Lesley McGuire daydreams prettily but did not convince me she would enchant a king.

JEREMY KINGSTON

Bow to a clown prince

In the past two years or so Peter Bowles has successfully played a sexual and emotional down-and-out in *Ratting*, a curmudgeon with a heart in the same writer's *In Praise of Love*, and a terrifyingly grim hood in a play called *Gangster Number One*. So I cannot believe anyone now thinks of him as a television actor of limited range.

But if such an invincible idiot still exists, he should at once be taken by cart or, preferably, tumbler to Peter Hall's revival of *School for Wives*. There, Bowles is giving a performance that should establish him once and for all on the top table, alongside the delectable wit and most complete actors we possess.

Arnolphe, the play's protagonist, is a blend of *Pygmalion* and old goat, and one of the maddest and saddest of Molière's monomaniacs. He bought Agnes when she was four, has educated her to know nothing and nobody but him, and is preparing for the day when he can transfer her unsullied body from her provincial hideaway into his bed.

"These days we turn out cuckolds by the score, one man in two is married to a whore," boasts Bowles's Arnolphe, pointing at bashful-looking members of the audience by way of emphasising that his love-life will be very different from the 17th or 20th-century average.

It is not only in tragedy that hubris rears its head — or, here, its auburn wig — and gets its comeuppance. Everything about Bowles proclaims self-satisfaction, from his precious voice and smug smile to

the purple lining of his suit and the odd, MacAnulphetan of his waistcoat. But then Molière presents him with trouble in the form of a young rival who also happens to be the son of an old clown. He must listen while Daniel Betts's trusting Horace confides his feelings for Gillian Kearney's doe-eyed Agnes and, for all the power that secrecy and pretended friendship give him, he must watch as love burgeons unstopably between them.

It is a marvellous comic situation, and Bowles gets his laughs all right. But he isn't content to be the vindictive pantoon or to smile glazed, ghostly

smiles and laugh weird asthmatic laughs while raging within. Jealousy changes him, and not wholly for the worse. The voracious old beau finds a growing tenderness for Agnes and a deepening despair inside himself. By the time he roters off with a tiny wail, thwarted by Molière's usual *deus ex machina*, he looks as if he has lost 3lb in weight and gained 30 years.

Moreover, Bowles achieves this while doing perfect justice to the rhymed iambs of Ranjit Bolt's sometimes elegant, sometimes exorbitantly colloquial translation. No wonder I went out touched and delighted from a production that also brings back to the stage Eric Sykes as Agnes's custodian. With his drooping jowls and beaky nose, the comedian is a hilarious mix of bloodhound, rooster and parrot. And when he starts lugubriously mumbling or getting his fingers

caught in his buttonholes, you wonder if he risks unbalancing the production.

But no. Didn't Molière himself highlight the comedy? Didn't clowning remain part of the recipe as his comedy

darkened? And, anyway, who could upstage Bowles in this mood? Not Sykes, not all three Marx Brothers, not anyone.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

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Mannered baby-talk in the continuous present: Ian McIntyre on the unusual correspondence of two best-selling American authors

Collaborators in all but name

THE LETTERS
OF
GERTRUDE STEIN
AND
THORNTON WILDER
Edited by Edward Burns
and Ulla E. Dydo
with William Rice
Yale University Press, £25
ISBN 0 300 06774 7

I have always found that a little of Gertrude Stein goes a long way. If anyone says "Rose is a rose" is a rose, is a rose" in my hearing I have mild intimations of apoplexy. A professor of creative writing once explained that this famous line (published in *Tender Buttons* in 1914) represented a significant attempt to free poetry from the conventions of logic and grammar and give more direct expression to the quality of objects. Him.

Gertrude Stein herself, in her *Lectures in America*, attempted to explain her stylistic experiments in prose. She was influenced by the pioneering psychologist William James, whose pupil she had been, and also by Henri Louis Bergson's concept of time; her theories, in turn, influenced the likes of Sherwood Anderson and Hemingway. It was the business of art to live in "the complete actual present."

Her prose resembles an assemblage of cinematic frames, a succession of largely repetitive phrases advancing the sense of what she sought to convey in painfully slow motion. Punctuation was an impediment to the rhythmic patterns she was intent

on creating she relied mainly on verbs. Nouns were the lumpen-proletariat of language — "things once they are named the name does not go on doing anything to them and so why write in nouns". She met Thornton Wilder in Chicago in 1934. She was 60, he 36. She, with her lesbian lover Alice Babbette Toklas, had spent the last 30 years in France, her salon frequented by painters as well as writers — Juan Gris, Matisse, Picasso. Wilder, with a much more conventional, strongly Protestant

background, was teaching English at the university, and seven years previously had won wide popularity (and his first Pulitzer Prize) with *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*.

They were both best-selling authors, but they had little else in common and knew little of each other's work. The letters they exchanged over the ensuing 12 years chart the remarkable friendship that developed between them and offer glimpses of how each influenced — or attempted to influence — the other's writing.

Wilder emerges as what Scots call a bletherskite — "Well, I have paid you the tenuous compliment of writing you a letter when I have nothing to say." He burbles away over the years about everything



Remarkable friendship: Stein and Wilder (1937)

under the sun: "Here I am, dipping into adolescence at forty, so there's hope for me." Or again, "I am often struck with the fact that I do not suffer enough and am all too easily given to a blithe comple-

ment absorption in the Trivia that interest me, like a sparrow enjoying himself in a dust-bath."

Almost all Wilder's letters are addressed to Stein and Toklas jointly — "Dear Bonnies over the Water," "Dear Apprentices Angels," "Dear Gertrude, dear Algetrudie." The relationship resembled that between a nephew and two indulgent aunts.

Stein's letters are written in a mannered baby-talk, which reminds me of the Ant and Bee books I used to read to my children:

"Here we are and shopping and then we leave on the 4 by the Champlain and we are sad most sad because we loved it, we really truly loved it, we loved it all and this summer we will tell each other

about it each other includes you and you will be there..." Her *Geographical History of America* is full of sentences like "In the United States there is more space where nobody is than where anybody is." She is the Grandma Moses of the written word.

What did they get out of it? Stein was eager to tap into Wilder's network of theatre connections and — surprisingly — given her idiosyncratic way with words — to persuade him into some form of literary collaboration: "Ever since my earliest days when I read Erickman Chatrian's *L'Ami Fritz* in what language I do not know I have loved the word collaborate and I always wanted to and now will you oh Thornton will you will you collaborate on *Ida the Novel*, we must do it together..."

Wilder responded by suggesting that her influence on him was such that they already were collaborators in all but name: "This play is an immersion into a New Hampshire town. It's called *Our Town*

and its third act is based on your ideas, as on great pillars, and whether you know it or not, until further notice, you're in a deep-knot collaboration already."

Some months later, in a letter beginning "Dear Engelstoff," he returns to her influence in a passage which succeeds in being simultaneously embarrassing and amusing: "Oh, what fun it is to be coddled by Gertrude, to be enlightened, and slapped, and warmed, and crushed, and slain, and brought alive by Gertrude. As the ladies of the invaded island in *L'île des Penguins* cried: 'When do the atrocities begin?'"

Wilder described Stein's gift for conversation as akin to that of Goethe, Johnson or Coleridge. In the absence of any evidence of that in this edition to the "Henry McBride Series in Modernism and Modernity" we must take his word for it. And, in fairness, seek evidence from elsewhere. "Anyone who marries three girls from St Louis hasn't learnt much," she once remarked of Hemingway. She can't have been so tedious as the letters printed here suggest.

Run dry, the beloved country

Now that apartheid has gone, R. W. Johnson finds that some South African writers are left with little to say

There is something a little fraudulent about all three of these books. Those of us who actually live in South Africa have become weary of over-familiar with a new, if fleeting, literary genre of which the first two books form part: an ex-South African, long and permanently settled in other parts, make one or several trips back to the old country, write up their outpourings of memory and belonging, the apocryphal and the apocryphal, and then depart for their real home, not too far from the Camden tube or the Odeon metro. (Breyten Breytenbach did this first — and incomparably well, but at least he lives and works here part of every year now). Justin Cartwright's book is the most intelligent and best written of the three but it already sounds a rather dated and exterior view.

The Brink collection both in its title and its cover (black youngsters sitting on a peeling poster of Mandela) suggests a brave contemporary but in fact consists mainly of articles from as far back as 1982. The fact is that Brink, like not a few other writers, looks at a bit of a loss these days. Far too many writers — and they not alone — were dangerously over-dependent on riding the old anti-apartheid warhorse and feel bereft by its ending. In the hottest hour of the anti-apartheid struggle many dissident souls threw their energies into religion or writing novels, plays or poetry because, at the end of the day, you could get away with all manner of things from the pulpit or in literature. Today — thank god for normalisation — the omph has gone out of much of the writing and there are not a few abandoned pulpits.

EVERY SECRET THING

My Family, My Country
By Gillian Slovo
Little Brown, £16.99
ISBN 0 316 63998 2

NOT YET HOME

A South African Journey
By Justin Cartwright
Fourth Estate, £14.99
ISBN 1 85708 408 6

REINVENTING A CONTINENT

By André Brink
Secker and Warburg, £10
ISBN 0 436 20367 7

Gillian Slovo's book has a greater interest, however, for it is the story of her sad, indeed anguishing search for two lost parents, Ruth First and Joe Slovo — one lost to a murderous bomb, the other lost to cancer, but actually — and this is the real epicentre of the author's sadness — both lost much earlier as real parents to the higher claims of the anti-apartheid struggle. Lenin and Krupskaya, on getting married, resolved that since they would both be working full-time for the revolution, they must not have children but not many other revolutionaries have been so disciplined and the cost for the children is high.

Much of the book is taken up with Gillian Slovo's account of her mother and father viewed through a child's lens and through the harrowing scenes around Ruth's death, but it then progresses to an attempted exploration for them in contemporary South Africa. The result is extremely sharp. Her father, by then Housing Minister in the

Mandela government, is furious at her prying and will tell her nothing. This is not altogether surprising for by then she is on the track of her father's and mother's ex-ow-ers, all of which comes tumbling out as a terrible surprise to her — making her feel even worse about her childhood when she realises that she was neglected not only for political reasons but for affairs of the heart. This culminates in a shaking meeting with a hitherto unknown half-brother, Joe's illegitimate child. Like not a few children before her, she quickly comes to accept this new reality as part of a larger picture.

But the hurt that will not die is her mother's murder and thus she tracks down the former BOSS agent, Craig Williamson, who accords her a long interview, frankly acknowledging that he was "part of the loop" in the planned assassination and giving her elaborate chapter and verse as to how it was done — while denying any final responsibility. Her account of the interview is studded with furious accusations against him as her mother's entirely personal murderer. This is way over the top: one feels sympathy for her rage and sorrow but nobody yet knows who exactly gave the order for Ruth's death. Similarly, one is a little at a loss to know how to feel about her earlier revelations for the truth is that there has for many years been plentiful gossip about Joe's affairs in particular and even about the existence of an illegitimate son. One is left with the feeling that she may have only scraped the surface and that a great deal remains to be learnt about South Africa's premier revolutionary couple.



Supporters awaiting the arrival of Mandela, Lamontville 1994, from *Living Apart* by Ian Berry (Phaidon, 1996)

Silken terms precise

"THIS PLACE, Japan, where precisely is it?" Balbadiou raised the tip of his cane and pointed beyond the roofs of Saint-August. "That way and keep going." He said, "Right to the end of the world."

It is 1861, Hervé Joncour is a silk merchant in the French town of Lavilledieu, and Balbadiou is his mentor. When the world supply of silkworm eggs is decimated, Joncour travels four times to the one place unaffected: the end of the world, Japan. There he buys worm eggs "Attached to hundreds of silvers of mulberry bark" and transports them back across Siberia and the Ural, arriving back "On the first Sunday in April, in time for High Mass. He entered the town on foot, counting his steps, that each might have a name, and that he might never forget them."

In this slim volume *Baricco* cuts his prose thin and fine. The chapters come one to a page as Hervé Joncour returns again and again to Japan, obsessed not

Tobias Hill

SILK

By Alessandro Baricco
Harvill, £6.99
ISBN 1 85046 310 X

with silk but with the face of a girl. At their best, the sections have a clarity which resembles poetry, and no poetry so much as Japanese haiku, as in chapter 49 (quoted whole): "Nothing but silence on the road. The corpse of a little boy on the ground. A man kneeling. Until the last glimmer of daylight."

There is a sense of language intentionally created to be like silk — not the simple adjective "Silky", but the material itself, raw, dense and clear. There are extraordinary narrative devices — line breaks, journeys from Japan to France compressed into 20 lines, a Spanish architect who speaks in questions, and the fairytale repetition of arrivals and departures as Joncour travels to and from the end of the world. Japan, too, is presented as the otherworld of folk-tales, where time almost seems to pass at a different rate. The result is the mixture of the fabulous and prosaic found in Marquez and in the best children's fiction — *The Little Prince* or Patrick Suskind's *The Story of Mister Summer*. Baricco has created a story of "Seavoyages, the smell of mulberries at Lavilledieu, steam trains", but most of all of impossible love. "Something capable of lifting a life off its hinges."

Only one thing false about this Fair Lady

Nicholas Wapshott

AUDREY HEPBURN
By Barry Paris
Weidenfeld, £20
ISBN 0 297 81725 0

other-worldliness. Half Irish, half Dutch, her gamine looks made her appear starkly exotic next to Hollywood's sumptuous home-grown actresses. Trained as a dancer, Hepburn maintained a dancer's enigmatic figure and she looked just fine barefooted in a black leotard. While some part of her attraction was her lack of girlishness, maturity, another was her blatant boyishness, which she emphasised with close-cropped hair and the apparent absence of face make-up. It is little wonder that Hubert de Givenchy and Cecil Beaton found her the perfect clothes-horse.

Unlike her more knowing American rivals, Hepburn maintained an air of studied innocence which was largely genuine. While her early conquests included the Yorkshire industrialist James Hanson, who nearly made it to the altar with her, others, among them the insatiable William Holden, recorded that she was not much interested in sex. While this virginal quality stood her



An air of studied innocence: Audrey Hepburn on the set of *Love in the Afternoon* (1957)

in good stead for a string of hits, such as *Sabrina*, *Funny Face*, *My Fair Lady* and above all *The Nun's Story*, it totally inverted the meaning of *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. Her rendering of Holly Golightly, Truman Capote's rough, trashy tart with a heart, became an anodyne androgynous

Capote moaned, "It bore about as much resemblance to my work as the Rockettes do to Ulanova."

Accounts of Hepburn's life keep coming. Barry Paris's is, by my reckoning, at least the ninth — and Weidenfeld's second hears-chaser in three years. There are irritating

mistakes — "Lord James Hanson" throughout — and some ill considered statements — "The suffering of English Fascists, at its worst, was nothing compared to the Nazi crimes against the Jews" — and Paris is perhaps too trusting of the showbusiness myth machine. Hepburn may have been "dis-

covered" in a hotel foyer by the French grand-dame Colette with the words "Voilà! There is my Gigi", but I doubt it.

Also left largely unexplained is the political context of Hepburn's upbringing. Her parents were devoted to Oswald Mosley, the British fascist, and were so thick with the Nazis that, while touring Germany with Unity Mitford, among others, they were granted an audience with Hitler. On the outbreak of war Hepburn's mother was in London. Without hesitation she scammed back to Holland with her daughter, where, in the absence of her husband, who was interned in Britain, she dated German officers of the occupying army. Yet, without so much as a gear-change, Paris reports that Audrey Hepburn soon became a courier for the Underground, smuggling notes in her shoes.

While Paris is as thorough in his research as is to be expected from an American journalist and Slavic linguist working out of Pittsburgh, and stories from the glorious Billy Wilder (director of *Sabrina*) constantly bring a smile, the wealth of detail disguises Paris's inability to get to the heart of what it was about Hepburn that has made her such an enduring icon. But perhaps only pictures can do that.

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CRICKET

Relaxed England hot favourites to wrap up series

FROM ALAN LEE, CRICKET CORRESPONDENT, IN CHRISTCHURCH

FOR 32 games, spanning 34 months, England have not once felt willing and able to name an unchanged Test team. The fact that they will surely do so unhesitatingly at Lancaster Park today is a powerful argument for their ability to complete an overseas series win for the first time since they were last in New Zealand, five winters ago.

There really ought to be no doubt about it. In the two Tests played to date, England have been so totally dominant that no New Zealander could be confident of a place in their team. It is a delightfully new experience for most of the players and there is no logical reason to suspect that they will be denied by defeat in this final match.

True, this barren ground — built principally for rugby and unworthy of a charming city — has witnessed some stirring New Zealand victories. In 1984, they humiliated England, bowling them out for 82 and 93 to win by an innings, and in the past ten years they have won here against West Indies, India and Pakistan.

Yet the present New Zealand side seems incapable of heroics. It is much the same group of players that won notably in Lahore only last November, but unless their batting guru, Martin Crowe, has performed miracles in the space of three days, they will remain technically inadequate against accomplished Test match bowlers.

This is not a description that could be conferred upon many England attacks of recent vintage, but the bowlers who combined successfully in Wellington, and will regroup here, offered aggression, control and balance — the virtues for which Michael Atherton has been yearning in vain almost throughout his time as captain.

Interestingly, two of the bowlers were in the last unchanged England team, for the Antigua Test of 1994 that immediately followed a heady win in Barbados.

Neither Andy Caddick nor Philip Tufnell will regard their Antigua analyses with much affection, for it was a match

monopolised by Brian Lara's monumental 375, and both have been out of favour for much of the interim period. Tufnell has played only nine of the 32 Tests since Antigua, including the four on this tour, while Caddick has been chosen for just two. As he took six wickets in each of them, at Leeds last August and then in Wellington, he is entitled to feel other bowlers have been unjustly promoted ahead of him.

Caddick's ability is not in question, but those who sit in judgment have seldom been sure of his approach. He is a misfit within a team environment, an awkward, shy and rather solitary figure. He is inclined to speak bluntly and

TEAMS

ENGLAND (from): M.A. Atherton (captain), N.Y. McGrath, J.P. Crowe, R.D. B. Cook, D.G. Cook, D. Gough, A.R. Caddick, P.C.R. Tufnell, C. Wright.

NEW ZEALAND (from): L.K. Garmson (captain), S.A. Pocock, B.A. Young, M.J. Horne, S.P. Thompson, N.J. Astle, C.L. Cairns, D. N. Patel, S.B. Doull, G.I. Allen, D. Vettori, M.J. Davis, C.L. Hogg.

Umpires: S. D'Silva and D. Hale (Australia). Third umpire: D. Chappell.

humourously and he does not spare himself.

"I am a self-critical person," he explained. "I think that is the way to make myself better. I talk myself down because then the only way to go is up."

His ways have sometimes seemed perverse, but perhaps too much has been made of this. When his bowling rhythm is right, as it was in Wellington, he is a class act, a more dangerous bowler than most of those England have tried during his career. This should be the ultimate measure of him.

This is a homecoming for Caddick. His parents, Chris and Audrey, still live a tentative drive from Lancaster Park, where he once played for the Riccarton club as a teenager. His brother, Paul, who runs the family decorating business, is also expected to be in the crowd.

Caddick has heard himself branded a "traitor" from the terraces at least once on tour.

further reason for his stoically unemotional attitude. "I will not make this a special game," he said. "My home is in England now."

However, it is not only Caddick who feels familiar with these surroundings. The England players all appear comfortable with conditions here and the inability to maximise home advantage has been a contributory factor to New Zealand's position. Indeed, at this stage, it is difficult to imagine a pitch they could prepare that might seriously disadvantage England.

The groundsman at Lancaster Park says nobody influenced him and that he expects his pitch to support batting first. England were so unconcerned that none of their management team bothered to look at it yesterday, when the players were freed to take part in a charity golf event. New Zealand, however, indicated that they expect the pitch to have a generous covering of grass by adding Heath Davis, the fastest bowler in the country, to their 12.

The subdued state of Dominic Cork and the poor batting form of Nick Knight are England's main concerns. Since his gallantry in Bulawayo, where he made a memorable 96 not out in the run chase, Knight has managed only 58 runs in four Test innings and his habit of thrashing the bat away from his body outside off stump is regularly exposing him when the ball is swinging.

If he falls again here, Knight will find himself under pressure from Mark Butcher — who impressed on the England A tour of Australia — before the summer's Ashes series. This will be an altogether more daunting proposition and the immaturity of it is sufficient to keep every player motivated.

"Missing out on that series is a hell of a threat," the coach, David Lloyd, said. "It would be very foolish to develop complacency and we are not kidding anyone that one win is a turning point. The only way to stop criticism is to keep winning."

Such things have not been said of Cork since his stirring Test debut two years ago and he will not enjoy hearing them now, but the England management must address the reasons for the sudden shortfall in Cork's performance, because it threatens to diminish the most resourceful bowling attack they have fielded in years.

On his good days, when adversity is not playing on his nerves, David Lloyd, the coach, conjures some appropriate verbal images. As the Test ended on Monday, he spoke of his five bowlers



The resurgence of Gough, left, has coincided with a worrying loss of form for Cork. England need them both to be at their best

Cork short of swing and swagger

One man played conspicuously little part in the victory in the second Test. Alan Lee on a strike bowler who has lost his way

Even amid the euphoria of a Test match victory, and its sense of breathless salvation, there is a cloud on England's horizon, one they could not possibly have forecast. It concerns the form and general welfare of the man they had come to regard as their most potent match-winner, Dominic Cork.

To say that Cork passed unnoticed at Wellington while England bowled out New Zealand twice in the equivalent of five sessions is evidence enough that he was ineffectual. Cork's one wicket in the match was that of a hapless tailender and, unlike Andy Caddick, he did not have injustice on his side. It might even be said he was flattered.

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"poking the opposition in the chest". He was referring to an intensity of pressure, present almost throughout the five days at the Basin Reserve, but which eased perceptibly whenever Cork had the ball.

A few months ago, this would have been inconceivable. As Michael Atherton, the captain, said in mitigation: "Corky has been carrying on attack for a while now." So he has, and one should not condemn him for an indifferent week or two, especially as Caddick and Darren Gough have responded so creditably to the challenge.

The contrast this week was inescapable, however. Between them, Caddick and Gough bowled 50 overs in the New Zealand second innings and took six for 92. Cork was given just ten overs and conceded 42 runs without taking a wicket. Atherton must have been sorely tempted to overlook him when the second new ball became due, as it was, he allowed him only two overs.

Atherton will not publicly admit he is worried about Cork, any more than Cork

himself will concede he is a troubled soul, but both men know it is true and it is to be hoped they get together for a serious talk before the final Test begins today.

Cork's late arrival on this tour, a delay on compassionate grounds rather than those of fitness, did not seem to matter when he took three wickets in the first session at Hamilton last month. The outwinger was working well

and his action seemed fluent. In the second innings of that match against Northern Districts, though, he left the field with a back injury and things have not been the same since.

The extent of that injury is still a curiosity. A day later, he was struggling to bend sufficiently to pick up a kit bag, yet only five days after apparently breaking down, he was playing in the Auckland Test. He took three wickets, bowling serviceably, but he was used little in the

frustrating later stages of that drawn game, a portent of things to come in Wellington.

Cork is now struggling for rhythm. He is not swinging the ball as he can and his action looks strained. He is also, subconsciously, beginning to look for excuses. He made a great play of the wet run-up on the first afternoon in Wellington and was eventually taken off. Gough, who replaced him, charged in undeterred by the admittedly wet ground and took three wickets inside four overs.

Only Cork can know how much he is being affected by the sad disruption in his private life, but he is certainly far less gregarious than usual. Even on Monday night, he admitted he abandoned the celebrations and was in bed by 9.30pm. Here again, the management have a job they must look out for his state of mind as much as they look out for his technique.

It is an ironic fate that can inflict on Cork his first spell of international toil at the very time when Gough has recaptured his most impressive form, for previously

it has happened in reverse. In 1995, Gough's belated but brilliant exploits in Australia were cut short by injury, then a struggle for form and his rapidly acquired profile as the best of English cricket was passed to the new meteor, Cork.

Thankfully, these two have no jealousy of each other. On the contrary, they are close friends and England now need them to be mutually supportive, for the promise that this winning team might just offer some continuity of personnel and performance will not be fulfilled until both are bowling at their best.

While the Test this week is a homecoming for Caddick, who was born in Christchurch, it is also an evocative return for Cork and Gough. A few winters back, as young bucks on the county circuit, they spent the off-season together here, playing club cricket.

The story goes that Cork's club provided him with the most basic form of transport, a bicycle. Bridling, he moved in with his Yorkshire pal so that he could borrow his sponsored car. It might be partly apocryphal, but it is most appropriate. In this of all weeks, Cork needs to borrow a little of Gough's supply of magic to reinforce England's dominance of an inferior New Zealand side.

Tufnell's top spinning display

BY SIMON WILDE

THERE could be worse places than Lancaster Park, Christchurch, for England to attempt to win their first Test series overseas since 1992. One infamous disaster aside, they have an excellent record there and on their last visit produced one of their best sessions of cricket to clinch a resounding win.

Five years ago, England outplayed New Zealand throughout the game, scoring 580 for nine and enforcing the follow-on with a lead of 268. But, at tea on the final day, New Zealand still had seven wickets in hand and a draw looked likely.

England won with ten minutes to spare thanks to superb bowling from Philip Tufnell, who played perhaps his best game for his country in taking 11 wickets from 85.1 overs of accurate, flighted spin on an unhelpful pitch.

Five of his wickets came in that last session, the fifth being that of Martin Crowe, who skied the ball into the hands of mid-off seeking the boundary that would have cleared the arrears and ensured the match was drawn. England's only other survivor from that match, Alec Stewart, scored 148.

Thirteen years ago, on the

other hand, England gave one of their most inept performances, dismissed twice for less than 100 — Richard Hadlee taking eight wickets and scoring 99 — in a game that occupied less than 12 hours' playing time. Beaten by an innings and 132 runs, it remains their heaviest defeat in 76 Tests against New Zealand.

NEW ZEALAND AND ENGLAND AT CHRISTCHURCH: Results: Played 13, England won 6, New Zealand won 1, drawn 6. Records (England first): Highest totals: 580-9 dec (1991-92); 417-6 dec (1950-51). Lowest totals: 80 (1980-81); 65 (1970-71). Highest individual scores: 287 W.A. Hammond (1932-33); 116 W.A. Hadlee (1968-69) and B. Stanger (1969-71). Best bowling: 7-47 P.C.R. Tufnell (1991-92); 6-63 J. Crowe (1946-47).

Batsman who kept up family tradition

BY JOHN WOODCOCK

D.C.H. Townsend, who has died at the age of 84, was a member of one of cricket's most extended dynasties. His grandfather, Frank, an adventurous batsman, was prominent in helping the three Graces — W.G., Fred, and E.M. — establish Gloucestershire as a county club; his father, C.L., was a brilliant schoolboy bowler at Clifton, who went on to win two caps as an all-rounder for England; his two uncles, A.F.M. and F.N., played for Gloucestershire, and both his brother,

P.N., and his own son, J.R.A., played for Oxford University without gaining a Blue.

David Townsend himself is the last cricketer to have appeared for England without ever playing for a first-class county. Chosen to go to the West Indies with the MCC team in 1934-35, on the strength of having scored 193 for Oxford in the University match of 1934, he played in three of the four Test matches there, each time opening the England innings with his captain, R.E.S. Wyatt.

With Leslie Constantine and E.A. Martindale in their bowling prime at the time, Townsend's six Test innings brought him only 77 runs; but against Guyana at Georgetown, he and Walter Hammond shared an unbroken partnership of 203 in taking MCC to one of only two wins they achieved on the tour.

Most of Townsend's cricket was played for Durham, the county of his birth, well before their elevation to first-class status. He played for them, more often in some seasons than others, from 1935 until 1948 and captained them, when fitness and his duties as a solicitor allowed, between 1937 and 1947.

ATHLETICS: PAID LEAVE THE CATALYST FOR REVIVAL OF INTEREST

Griffiths delivers stamp of class

BY DAVID POWELL

ATHLETICS CORRESPONDENT

AS Shirley Griffiths, a postwoman from Crumlington, Northumberland, set foot last weekend on the path towards the world indoor championships in Paris next month, she could see two letter boxes — one marked first-class, she realised that second-class speed would be too slow for her needs.

After 100 metres of the 1,500 metres at the British trials, Griffiths sensed that the pace would not deliver her to the finish within the qualifying time. "I thought: 'I am just going to have to leg it,'" she said. With a solo effort, Griffiths arrived before deadline.

Not only was it refreshing to see another British woman middle-distance runner with the strength of purpose of a Kelly Holmes or Paula Radcliffe, but also the moment captured the rich flavour of the trials. There is a new guard emerging in British athletics, Griffiths being better than the average because, like Holmes, she has returned to athletics after abandoning the sport when she left school.

"I stopped running and went out drinking, having fun," Griffiths said. "I grew so

fat, 11st." In 1991, aged 18, Griffiths joined the Post Office, where a Crumlington clubman informed her that, if she could qualify for the British women's postal team, she would be granted a week off work to take part in the European championships.

"A week off work, getting paid, tempted me," Griffiths said. "When I ran at first, my legs were so fat that I had to rub Vaseline on to stop them chaffing." She has improved each year since, bringing her indoor best down to 4min 14.98sec in Birmingham, 0.02sec inside the world qualifying time. Her seven-mile postal round, for which she rises before 5am, is not ideal preparation for daily training.

Griffiths is determined to make the best of it. "I am only part-time, four hours a day, but it is really tiring," Griffiths said. "I am next in line for full-time, but I will not be doing it." Athletics comes first.

The most colourful parade of new guard soldiers came in the men's 400 metres, where Jamie Baulch, 23, set a British record while Mark Hyatt, 20, and Guy Bullock, 21, moved into the all-time national top seven. Joining them in Paris, provided that the selectors are forward thinking enough, will be Damien Greaves, the runner-up to Colin Jackson in the 60 metres hurdles.

Greaves, 19, is the nephew of Wilbert Greaves, a former

international hurdler, who coaches him. His 7.53sec was his fifth personal best this winter. Though Greaves is unlikely to reach the final in Paris, the selectors should regard the experience that he would gain as an investment.

Rhian Clarke, 19, over the bar at 3.80 metres already, looks set to establish herself as Great Britain's No 1 woman pole vaulter, while Hayley Parry, 23, who beat Diane Modahl with a highly impressive 800 metres win in 2min 2.36sec, is on the doorstep of world class.

Doug Turner's 200 metres victory in 20.61sec drew him from the margins into the world all-time top 20. Aged 30, Turner is a late developer, attributing his improvement to Jack Anderson, his coach of two years. "He could not break 22 seconds when he came to me," Anderson said.

Turner has timed his entrance perfectly, given that Linford Christie has retired from championships and John Regis is on the wane. Malcolm Arnold, Britain's head coach, described the old Turner as "a bit of a dreamer who never really put his mind to anything." Which, more or less, is what Ron Roddan used to say about Christie before, at 25, he knuckled down.

States, the world indoor champion, was his second over him in two outings, though there is ample opportunity for Hall to regain the upper hand before he defends his title in Paris. This was the first of the four Ricoh indoor grand prix meetings before Paris and Baulch and Hall are due to meet again in Lievin, Stockholm and Birmingham before the month is out.

Baulch's victory over Darrell Hall, of the United

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Baulch's victory over Darrell Hall, of the United

MOTOR RACING

Williams to miss start of Senna death trial

BY OLIVER HOLT

FRANK WILLIAMS, Patrick Head and Adrian Newey, the three members of the Williams Formula One team jointly accused of the manslaughter of Ayrton Senna, will probably be absent when the trial opens in Italy next week.

Williams said last month that he and his colleagues would be present at the small magistrates court in Imola, near Bologna, on February 20 for the start of what promises to be a long drawn-out case. However, he has been advised subsequently that their presence will be superfluous on a day that will be dominated by procedural detail. The three defendants will travel to the trial, which is expected to last throughout the summer and could take ten years to reach a final conclusion, later in the year.

It also emerged yesterday that, because of a procedural quirk of Italian law, Damon Hill, who was Senna's teammate on the day he was killed during the San Marino Grand Prix on May 1 1994, will be asked to give evidence for the prosecution at Imola, even though it is thought his

contribution will do little to advance their case.

Bernie Ecclestone, president of the Formula One Constructors Association, will also be questioned by the prosecution and the trial is likely to feature a host of leading drivers, including Michael Schumacher, whose Benetton was following Senna's Williams when it crashed at the Tamborello corner.

In a separate development yesterday, Max Mosley, the president of the International Motor Sport Federation, said his organisation had initiated a move towards the formulation of a Europe-wide law providing exemption to participants and officials involved in dangerous sports, such as motor racing and skiing, to prevent them being tried for manslaughter after accidents.

Rory Byrne, the former Benetton designer, will take over from John Barnard as chief designer at Ferrari next week. Byrne, a South African, will be back in harness with Ross Brawn, the Italian team's new technical director and his partner during the emergence of Benetton as a motor racing force.

Rugby players take steps to improve fitness

With ballroom dancing lobbying hard to get into the Olympic Games by 2004, it seems that dance is stepping ever closer to the world of sport.

Its latest partner, unlikely as it sounds, is rugby union. Rugby players at Cambridge University have apparently found that something was lacking in their training — and have taken up ballet.

The squad at Queens' College have called in a ballerina to help them with their conditioning and are using ballet routines that they hope will improve their flexibility and balance — and help to keep them injury free.

Showing the pack how it should be done is Sara Matthews, a 31-year-old who was with the Ballet Rambert for 11 years. She is also working with the college rowing eights. It is an interesting approach, especially since many have been critical of rugby's traditional standard of fitness.

The use of dance for sports conditioning is an example of what fitness gurus call cross-training. Until recently, the typical athlete pursued only his own sport. Today, the wisdom is that an athlete can derive

significant benefit from other activities, such as weight training, and from training in other sports.

In the United States, professional sportsmen, including baseball players, American footballers and basketball teams, regularly use karate, aerobic dancing, yoga and ballet to supplement their training regimes.

However, whether or not British ballet dancers are the best people to be advising anybody on physical fitness is highly questionable. According to a report published last October, many of Britain's 25,000 professional dancers are so unfit that they sustain more injuries than players in contact sports such as rugby and boxing.

The myth of the superfit dancer exercising at the barre was exploded by the "Fit to Dance?" report that was written after a five-year survey into dancers' health and injuries. It found that they took the wrong kind of exercise, ate the wrong kind of food and smoked too much.

More than eight out of ten dancers are injured each year and they are also more prone than the average person to colds and flu. And it is not



just ballet dancers who suffer. The study reached similar conclusions after looking at all kinds of professional dancers.

Dancers, the report concluded, sacrificed all-round fitness for the demands of flexibility. Such role models look a bit shaky, even for college rugby players.

The champions of ballroom dancing, who have won recognition from the International Olympic Committee, protest that "dance sport" makes tremendous demands on strength and stamina and should be included as a full gold medal sport.

Though the moves to get dancing recognised as a sport are relatively recent, dance has long been acknowledged as an aid to physical fitness.

Duke Adolphus Frederick of Mecklenburg, writing almost a century ago, recorded remarkable athletic performances by the Watossi tribesmen of central Africa.

He was particularly impressed by their high jumping and photographed one tribesman making a leap of 8ft 2ins, taking off from a small termite heap a foot in height. He noted that these natives got splendid conditioning during tribal dances, performing vertical jumps to the rhythm of drums.

Back in Britain in the same era, Harry Andrews, who coached record-breaking runners and cyclists, was writing that dancing was a fine aid to athletic performance — though he had reservations about the smoky atmosphere of dance halls.

Thirty years later, the ultra-distance running champion, Arthur Newton, reckoned the use of music and rhythm was one of the secrets of breaking endurance records. He observed that soldiers could march further and faster when helped by the beat of a marching band and advocated humming and whistling while training. He hoped that someone

might one day invent a phonograph small enough to be carried by a runner — dreaming of the personal stereo 40 years before its time.

What all these pioneers had in common is that they saw the value of music and dancing as a conditioning tool for sport — but never as sport itself. Dancing, like massage, skipping, stretching and callisthenics, might be a useful way to keep fit, but could never be confused with the real business of competitive effort.

Whether ballet lessons will affect the competitive efforts of the Queens' College Cambridge rugby players remains to be seen. It might change their sporting lives. A couple of seasons ago, a budding soccer player, Nick Garbutt, who, at the age of 11, was top scorer for a Sutton Coldfield boys' team, took ballet lessons to improve his skills. As a result, he won a place at the Royal Ballet School in London and swapped his football boots for pointe shoes.

He might, of course, end up coaching rugby players.

Pioneers did not see dance as sport

JOHN BRYANT

SKIING

Tomba slip paves way for Swiss

By Our Sports Staff

ALBERTO TOMBA, the darling of the home crowds, had been competing for barely a minute yesterday when he pulled up to relinquish his giant slalom title to Michael von Grünigen, of Switzerland, at the alpine skiing world championships in Sestriere, Italy.

Tomba, whose season has been plagued by injury and illness, decided not to pursue his defence after almost falling on the early stages of his opening run, leaving the way clear for Von Grünigen to secure his first world title with an elegant and commanding performance from start to finish.

In contrast to the showman, Tomba, the Swiss is a quiet, family man and his composure on the slopes secured a second gold medal for his country at the championships. Von Grünigen, the World Cup giant slalom champion, recorded a winning time of 2min 48.23sec, 1.12sec ahead of Lasse Kjus, of Norway, who took his third silver medal.

Andreas Schifferer, of Austria, was the surprising bronze medal-winner, starting seventeenth on the first leg before moving up from ninth place at

the start of the second to beat Steve Locher, of Switzerland, by 0.03sec.

Schifferer had not been expected to qualify for the Austria team and his place on the podium came only a year after he suffered severe bruising of the brain in a downhill training crash in Kitzbühel. Kjus had also suffered concussion in a fall during the same season.

Tomba's followers had been gathering near the piste since dawn and were out in force, with banners and klaxons, to cheer on their hero. However, they fell silent when the triple Olympic gold medal-winner came close to falling. Realising that it was useless to try to get back into the race, Tomba, 30, slid straight off the course.

While Tomba was left with time on his hands, Von Grünigen used the interval between the two legs to play with his three-year-old son. The Swiss, whose supporters have so far come up with no more imaginative a nickname than MVC, said that he had learnt a lot from defeat by Tomba at the Sierra Nevada championships last year. Tomba had not been a



Tomba passes a gate before withdrawing in an ill-fated defence of his giant slalom title at Sestriere yesterday

worry for him, he said, given the Italian's poor form in giant slaloms this season and the pressure on the others. "This was my biggest goal this season and I feel I deserved this medal."

Von Grünigen, who has won two World Cup giant slalom races this season, was the first out of the start-house on the first run and took advantage of the clean snow to record by far the fastest time. Later starters found it hard to keep to the line.

Six of the first 15 crashed out, including some of the favourites for the race, such as Ura Kaelin, of Switzerland. Tomba complained that the run had been too long and that the conditions, with patches of light and shade, were treacherous. Others also criticised conditions for the first leg.

"I'm very sorry, but Saturday will be my day," Tomba said, referring to the closing event, the men's slalom, which he will also be defending.

Toni Sailer, of Austria, who won three golds at the 1956 Olympic Games, defended the lay-out of the first run and said

that it was the sort of traditional and highly demanding giant slalom that had gone out of fashion in recent years.

Kjus, who also won silver medals in the downhill and super giant slalom events, had no complaints about his race.

"The championships are over for me now and I'm going home to enjoy my medals," the 1996 World Cup overall champion said after securing his first medal in the technical discipline.

Results, page 46

TODAY'S FIXTURES

FOOTBALL	RUGBY LEAGUE
ARSENAL Insurance Combination: First division: Bristol City v Walsley (at Clevedon FC, 2.00, Southampton v Walsley (at 7.30)	Six Out Challenge Cup Fourth-round replay: Hull v Huddersfield (7.30)
FOOTBALL LEAGUE Premier division: Everton v Sheffield Wednesday (at Southampton FC, 7.00)	RUGBY UNION
FOOTBALL LEAGUE Premier division: Arsenal v Wolves (at 7.30)	Test matches: Bristol v Australia (7.30), Richmond v Glasgow (7.45)
FOOTBALL LEAGUE First division: Crystal Palace v Coventry (7.30)	OTHER SPORT
SCHOOLS MATCHES: Victory Shield under-15 International: Wales v England (at Nelson Park, Cardiff, 7.15), English: St Albans v Tottenham (7.15), English: St Albans v Tottenham (7.15), English: St Albans v Tottenham (7.15)	BASKETBALL: 7-11 Trophy: Semi-finals, second leg: Leicester Riders (8.00) v Cheshire Jets (8.30), London Titans (7.45) v Sheffield Sharks (7.50)
ICE HOCKEY: Superleague: Newcastle Comets v London Knights (8.00), London Knights v Newcastle Comets (8.30), London Knights v Newcastle Comets (8.30), London Knights v Newcastle Comets (8.30)	ICE HOCKEY: Superleague: Newcastle Comets v London Knights (8.00), London Knights v Newcastle Comets (8.30), London Knights v Newcastle Comets (8.30), London Knights v Newcastle Comets (8.30)
FOOTBALL LEAGUE Premier division: Arsenal v Wolves (at 7.30)	FOOTBALL LEAGUE Premier division: Arsenal v Wolves (at 7.30)

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 46

QUESTUARY
(a) Somebody whose first and only motivation is to make a profit. From the Latin for *profit*, *questuarius*. For example, a *questuarius* is a teenage child who will wash up or vacuum the sitting-room or baby-sit or make its bed only if paid to do so.

CONTECATION
(b) The act of stroking or caressing somebody furiously and against her (or his) will. From the Latin, "Are we agreed then? We shall begin by asking all candidates about their educational qualifications and their skills in relation to the selection criteria for human resources — communication, administration, finance, confection and so on..."

CURMUDGEON
(c) A cantankerous old codger. Both *curmudgeon* and *codger* apply exclusively to men. There appears to be no female equivalent. Perhaps *old cow* or *gruffin* (an old she-cow or spiteful old woman) comes closest to it. But the words are not synonymous. Can it be that women are by nature less curmudgeonly than men?

NULLIBIETY
(d) The state of being nowhere. The opposite of *ubiquity*. From the Latin. This is a word for which it is difficult to conceive any practical use in the world. But no conceivable word can be entirely useless. "When there is a job to be done about the house, I know I can rely absolutely on Anzole's nullibity."

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RUGBY UNION 46

Ashton adds the finishing touch to Ireland's plans

SPORT

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 13 1997

SKIING 50
Tomba lets world title slip from his grasp



Zola seizes on moment of defensive uncertainty to bring Italy victory at Wembley

England left looking back in anger

England 0
Italy 1

By ROB HUGHES
FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT

AT LUNCH yesterday, the Prime Minister had entertained overseas guests with the notion that there is no better home for the World Cup in the year 2006 than England. In the evening, out in the driving rain and rain at Wembley Stadium, Italy defeated England with an opportunistic goal from Gianfranco Zola that imperils English hopes of qualifying for the next World Cup on French soil in 1998.

It was so very typical, all haste and discordant effort from England, which was lost on an Italian side that had the greater technical control, that was always more sure of its purpose, and that accomplished without too much ado their country's seventh victory in ten meetings with England, Italy's fourth win in the past five encounters. They even stole England's proud record of being undefeated over 90 minutes for 29 internationals at Wembley.

Will England's followers never learn? There they were, singing in the rain for an hour before kick-off, and then they turned to the familiar shrill whistle of abuse for the Italian anthem. Quite apart from lost sportsmanship, it does nothing but provoke quality players to stick out their jaw, and to set about demonstrating their class.

Hodde had attempted to deceive, to invite Italy to believe that his team had such healing powers that Gascoigne would perform. Gas-

coigne was not even fit enough to be one of seven substitutes warming the England bench.

Probing for unity and looking as disparate as strangers, England attempted to break down Italy's return to their defensive tradition of *catenaccio*. Surprisingly, because Cesare Maldini, the veteran coach, is also a deceiver, it was Costacurta, the 40-year-old Milan marker, who was entrusted with the role of *libero*. With the young, rela-



GROUP TWO
P W D L F A Pts
England 3 2 0 1 7 3 6
Italy 3 2 0 1 3 3 6
Poland 3 1 1 1 4 4 3
Czech Republic 3 1 1 1 3 3 3
Slovakia 3 1 1 1 3 3 3
RESULTS: Moldova 0 England 3, Italy 1 Italy 3 England 2 Poland 1, Italy 1 Georgia 0 Georgia 0 England 2, Poland 2 Moldova 1, England 0 Italy 1.

tively untired Fabio Cannavaro tight up against Shearer, with Ferrara ready to step forward and deny space to Le Tissier, the England hope that Italy would be lured out of shape by unfamiliar English attacking ideas was forlorn.

True, thanks to Beckham, so lively on the right, and to McManaman's thirst for endeavour, England enjoyed an early territorial advantage. Almost inevitably, Zola, the

happy Chelsea wanderer, drew some Italian respite. How elegant was his control of the ball, how swift his low shot that deflected wide of an upright off Pearce. Before Zola made a more telling contribution, Le Tissier was to show his own languid art. He had crossed over with McManaman, was lurking on the right edge of the penalty box, and when the ball came to him, he needed one touch to master it, one sweep to project it goalwards. Ferrara is accustomed to such technique: he repels it every Sunday in Serie A, and now he blocked Le Tissier's intended shot.

Then came Zola. Costacurta may not be a seasoned *libero*, but he knows the function. Reading the open play in front of him, advancing to the halfway line, he suddenly unleashed a long through-ball, as if out of a catapult. Zola was ready, but Pearce was not.

Time, perhaps, tapped the 34-year-old Nottingham Forest defender on the shoulder, for he seemed inert and bemused. What was he doing, this man of 73 international caps, standing three yards upfield of a dangerous opponent? When Pearce awoke to that danger, Zola had scampered behind him and, as Campbell came lunging desperately across, Zola squeezed his shot between Walker and the near post.

Blame, in the first instance, the ball-watching of Pearce who, as a manager, would probably drop himself for indolence. Blame, if you must, Campbell for not realising the error of his compatriot sooner. And share that blame with Ian Walker, the inexperienced Tottenham Hotspur goalkeeper, who, despite a worrying season for him and his club, was somehow elevated in Hodde's mind ahead of Nigel Martyn and Tim Flowers, both of whom should have had higher claim in the absence of Seaman, through a knee injury.

Three times Zola baffled England, not least with a cunning volley that Walker saved with a punch. Somehow Carlo Ancelotti, the Parma coach, decided that this is a physical era, and Zola runs too close to the ground. England will delight in his skills, even if, in that eighteenth minute, he depressed the nation. When England recovered a semblance of rhythm, an edge of competition, it was Batty and Beckham, again, who stimulated it. It was close to half-time when Beckham attempted a 30-yard free-kick, which was no trouble at all for Peruzzi. However, the goalkeeper was less convincing moments later when Batty floated the ball in from the left. Peruzzi came and stopped in no man's land, and Le Tissier



Campbell's despairing lunge can only deflect Zola's shot beyond Walker, giving Italy victory in the World Cup qualifying match last night

produced a header that bounced a tormenting foot wide. The hour approached. England, given only glimmers of hope with speculative shots wide from Batty and Leaux, abandoned their experimental forward approach, going back to serial basics with Ferdinand replacing Le Tissier. Yet, though the blue shirts were in apparent retreat, it

was only to what they know and love best, consolidating their lead, drawing England's sting, holding and containing them. McManaman did momentarily break threateningly on the left. He made perhaps 15 yards before Baggio block-kicked him and came away with the ball. Professional to the nth degree, Italy had allowed Albertini to wear himself down running with

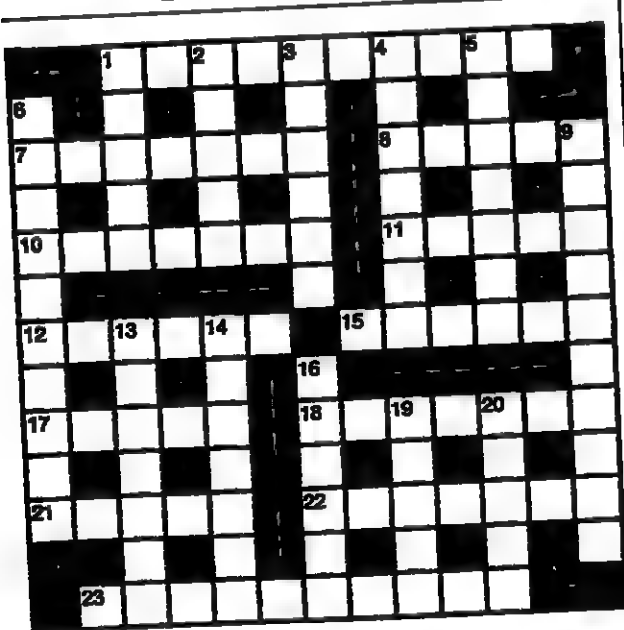
McManaman in the first half, now it was Baggio. But hope rose again, as England are nothing if not champions of spirit. In the 72nd minute, Leaux, a man who has retrieved his career from a horrendous ankle injury, struck a clever free kick menacingly beneath the cross bar. Peruzzi was equal to it again.

ENGLAND (3-4-3): 1 Walker (Tottenham Hotspur); 2 Neville (Manchester United); 3 Pearce (Birmingham Forest); 4 Batty (Manchester United); 5 Shearer (Blackburn Rovers); 6 Leaux (Blackburn Rovers); 7 McManaman (Liverpool); 8 Le Tissier (Southampton); 9 Ferdinand (Newcastle United); 10 Baggio (Juventus); 11 Peruzzi (Juventus); 12 Albertini (Juventus); 13 Di Matteo (Chelsea); 14 Maldini (Milan); 15 Zola (Chelsea); 16 Fusi (Parma); 17 Casanova (Lazio); 18 Rossi (Middlesbrough); 19 Ruffini (Parma); 20 Pini (Parma).

Campbell (Tottenham Hotspur); 2 Neville (Manchester United); 3 Pearce (Birmingham Forest); 4 Batty (Manchester United); 5 Shearer (Blackburn Rovers); 6 Leaux (Blackburn Rovers); 7 McManaman (Liverpool); 8 Le Tissier (Southampton); 9 Ferdinand (Newcastle United); 10 Baggio (Juventus); 11 Peruzzi (Juventus); 12 Albertini (Juventus); 13 Di Matteo (Chelsea); 14 Maldini (Milan); 15 Zola (Chelsea); 16 Fusi (Parma); 17 Casanova (Lazio); 18 Rossi (Middlesbrough); 19 Ruffini (Parma); 20 Pini (Parma).

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD

No 1016 in association with BRITISH MIDLAND



ACROSS

- 1 Fall to progress (3,7)
- 7 Batsman's go (7)
- 8 Fruit of a disappointment (5)
- 10 Regal rod (7)
- 11 Threaded fastener (5)
- 12 Curly salad plant (6)
- 15 Humble (onself) (6)
- 17 Fire-raising (5)
- 19 Arthur's, JFK's, court (7)
- 21 Eagle's nest (5)
- 22 Scandalous event (7)
- 23 Five-event athletic contest (10)

DOWN

- 1 Wish-granting spirit (5)
- 2 Item of doctrine (5)
- 3 R-month-edible creature (6)
- 4 Bishopric of Rome (4,3)
- 5 Regret for wrong (7)
- 6 Taming of Shrew musical (4,2,4)
- 9 From time to time (3,3,4)
- 13 Merit, earn (7)
- 14 — Van Gogh (7)
- 16 Approach (to confront) (6)
- 19 Substance as egg gold, iron (5)
- 20 Acquire knowledge (5)

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Name/Address

SOLUTION TO NO 1015

ACROSS: 1 Pot-shot 5 Mend 9 Fever 10 Pas seul 11 Praiseworthy 12 Sparse 13 Ribald 16 Once in a while 19 Pelican 20 Elgar 21 Dunk 22 Satisfy
DOWN: 1 Puff 2 Taverna 3 Herd instinct 4 Tappet 6 Exert 7 Delayed 8 Astonishment 12 Stopped 14 Alleges 15 Cannes 17 Colon 18 Grey

Major launches World Cup bid

By JOHN GOODBODY

ENGLAND'S bid to stage the 2006 World Cup was officially launched by John Major yesterday, although no official of Uefa, football's European governing body, was present at the reception at 10 Downing Street.

A host of English football luminaries joined representatives of Fifa, the game's world governing body, and the international media at the Prime Minister hailed the success of the European championship as evidence that the country is capable of staging the 32-nation tournament.

A Downing Street spokesman declined to comment on the absence of Uefa officials, who had not felt obliged to travel to London for the reception. However, Mr Major said: "There is a great will in the United Kingdom to have the prize of staging the World Cup. I believe it will be magnificently done and our facilities will be the equal of any in the world by then. There is no doubt about the desire of the British public to support the competition here."

Keith Wiseman, the chairman of the Football Association, described the recent dispute with Uefa as a "local difficulty". It was the invitation to Uefa officials to attend the reception, which also celebrated the success of Euro 96, that had sparked off the controversy over England's World Cup bid.

Two weeks ago, the Uefa executive committee reminded England that it had already endorsed Germany's candidature at meetings in 1993, 1994 and 1995. The FA then persuaded Uefa officials to come to London last Friday for

talks, during which they were persuaded to withdraw their unequivocal support for Germany. Instead, an elimination process will be set up to endorse the Continent's choice. Gerhard Berger, the general secretary of Uefa, who is German, said that a compromise plan for England and Germany to co-host the tournament had not been ruled out. "I come from a country where compromises are always sought... we will have to wait and see how it goes," he said.

It is by no means certain that any European country will stage the 2006 tournament, particularly since candidates have at least two years to apply before the vote is held in June 2000.

Olazábal plans March return

By MEL WEBB

A LONG and painful absence from golf appears to be nearing its end for José María Olazábal, the former Masters champion. Conventional methods of treatment to his severely arthritic feet having been tried and found wanting, he turned to a cure offered by a German consultant and is now on the brink of a return to tournament play.

The specialist, who treats the Bayern Munich football team and other leading sportsmen, recommended a course of treatment, an important part of which involved Olazábal walking barefoot for two miles a day in the surf near his home in Basque country in northeast Spain. The result is that he is likely to make his comeback in the Portuguese Open next month. It is a sea change from the situation a year ago, when there was even a possibility that Olazábal might never play professionally again.

"Physically, he is perfect," Sergio Gomez, his manager, said. "He is playing 18 holes a

day, but he is still looking for perfection before he formally announces his return. I want him to come back in top form."

Olazábal, 31, is expected to play in the Portuguese Open, which starts at Aveiro, near Lisbon, on March 13. The week after, he hopes to appear in the Turespaha Masters at Maspalomas in Gran Canaria.

Then he will have a short break before flying to New Orleans for the Freeport McDermott Classic a week before his first real challenge, the Masters, which he won in 1994.

Olazábal's compatriot, Severiano Ballesteros, makes his first appearance of the season today in the Dimension Data Pro-am in Sun City, part of which will be contested on a course that is close to the great Spaniard's heart.

Three of the four rounds of the tournament are to be played at the Gary Player Country Club, where Ballesteros won the Million Dollar Challenge in 1984. Nick Price, Ian Woosnam and the in-form Mark McNulty, all past winners at Sun City, are also in the field.



Olazábal regained fitness

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NO CONTEST

Peace and harmony (almost) on the economic front

Yesterday's quarterly Inflation Report issued by the Bank of England makes it clear that the difference of opinion over interest rates between the Bank and the Chancellor is a marginal matter. Expectations of a sharp rise in interest rates straight after the election are almost certainly misplaced. As Howard Davies, the Bank's Deputy Governor said in a speech on Tuesday night, the gap between the two sides' judgments on interest rates amounts to just one quarter of a percentage point.

The Bank's surprisingly moderate report also weakens the case of those who attack Mr Clarke for acting in an irresponsibly "political" manner by refusing to raise interest rates before the election. Whatever one may think about Mr Clarke's true motivations, the facts suggest that he has strong economic justifications for his caution about raising interest rates any further.

The Inflation Report makes clear that the reasons for the disagreement between the Bank and the Chancellor are slight and that both sides' positions can be backed up by genuine economic evidence and analysis. The pound is becoming dangerously strong; manufacturing and exports are not sharing in the recovery in consumer spending; and this recovery itself shows no signs of turning into a overheated boom.

Even the sharp decline in unemployment, a welcome trend which continued with yesterday's January figures, may not be as rapid as the figures suggest because of the introduction of the new Jobseekers' Allowance which has taken tens of thousands of people off the register. All of these factors support the Chancellor's decision to keep monetary policy on hold until there is more evidence about the underlying strength of consumer demand, the housing market and the European economy, as well as the durability of the market's enthusiasm for sterling.

The Bank, for its part, puts more stress on the rapid growth of the money supply, the high level of consumer confidence, the

possible effects of building society windfalls and the tentative fears of higher wage settlements, although there is little evidence to back this last concern. The Bank's emphasis is entirely understandable. Its mandate requires it to focus exclusively on the danger of inflation, rather than taking a fully balanced view about the medium-term prospects for economic growth, employment and exports.

In fact, a slightly more hawkish stance on interest rates than the one taken by Mr Clarke might have been appropriate, even on a broader view of the national interest than the one taken by the Bank. It can certainly be argued that the risks in the coming year are skewed more towards an unhealthy boom than a dangerous economic slowdown. More importantly, it will be easier, and more popular, for the next government to take countervailing action against a surprising economic slowdown than against an unexpected outbreak of inflationary fever.

To this limited extent Mr Clarke can be accused of allowing politics to colour his economic judgment. His decision not to raise interest rates now certainly makes it more likely that an incoming Labour government will have to raise interest rates or taxes, or both, shortly after the election. It is almost inconceivable that the next Chancellor's first act in office will be to announce a cut in mortgage rates.

Yet even the Bank believes that the tightening of monetary policy that will be needed straight after the election is likely to be "moderate", perhaps just a quarter of a point and probably no more than a half. There seems no imminent prospect of a return to Britain's familiar boom-bust cycle. There is less danger than a few months ago of a big overshooting by sterling and little chance of a sharp rise in interest rates. On balance, the country (and the Labour Party) should be grateful — both for the Bank's vigilance on inflation and for the generally sensible economic judgment of Mr Clarke.

GREEN AT THE EDGES

American foreign policy falls prey to interest groups — again

The US connection has long been a matter of controversy in Ulster politics. Although sometimes unappreciated in Britain, this involvement, when deployed with care and caution, has often been constructive. The judicial chairmanship of former Senator George Mitchell over the Stormont talks is a case in point. That participation has always, however, been threatened by the actions of those who could in no sense be considered honest brokers. The combination of Nancy Soderberg at the National Security Council and Ambassador Jean Kennedy Smith at the US Embassy in Dublin has been the chief cause of such distress.

The evident desire of Madeleine Albright, incoming US Secretary of State, to relocate policy as far as possible within her department, is essential to restoring a greater sense of balance and hence a broader scope of influence. Her willingness to meet the Ulster Secretary, Sir Patrick Mayhew, next week — as her predecessor never did — to discuss these matters further was entirely sensible. It seems now that reports in Britain noting the vulnerable position of Ambassador Smith have caused that meeting to be postponed in pique. This outcome reflects poorly both on Mrs Albright's political judgment and on the prospects for a fresh American approach to Northern Ireland.

The US Administration has been engaged in a painful process of reassessment of Ulster. President Clinton invested a great deal of personal political capital in the peace process and was persuaded that this required a particularly intense courtship of Sinn Féin and Gerry Adams. That confidence was severely shaken by the resumption of IRA violence, especially when it emerged that the preparation for this

outrage had been conducted just as the President made his pleas for reconciliation from Belfast City Hall.

The White House seemed to recognise the source of its embarrassment. Dubious advice had entered the Oval Office from Anthony Lake, his National Security Adviser, which Mr Clinton chose to grant favour over counsel from the State Department. Much of that analysis came through Ambassador Smith, whose enthusiasm for Gerry Adams knew few bounds. Whatever limited hopes Unionists might have had were shaken by her continual adoption of republican symbolism: her role as an extra in the film *Michael Collins* was only the most crass example of this.

Washington needs to move much closer to the stance taken by London and Dublin if it is to have any positive part in the post-Docklands peace process. This in turn requires the State Department consolidating its hold on the policy.

Yet not only has Mrs Albright mounted a defence of Ambassador Smith this week, which is her right, but the prospective deliberations with Sir Patrick Mayhew have been dropped from consideration. Whether this reflects the continued grip of the Kennedy clan over Mr Clinton or the influence of republican sympathisers in Congress on American diplomats can only be a matter of speculation.

Whatever the reason, it again looks as if American foreign policy is merely the outcome of a trial of strength among assorted interest groups. If so, the Unionists can hardly be expected to trust the United States. Without such faith there is little purpose in any Washington department attempting to exercise influence on Ulster's future.

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE FATWA

Britain must now take the lead against Tehran

Tomorrow is the eighth anniversary of the fatwa against Salman Rushdie, and the news from Tehran is grim. One of the most powerful members of the Iranian clergy, Ayatollah Sanei, has declared that the fatwa still stands and that the bounty on his head will be increased, at least temporarily, to \$2.5 million, in order to incite "Muslim or non-Muslim" including Rushdie's bodyguards "to assassinate the author of *The Satanic Verses*".

After five years of "critical dialogue" with Tehran, it is time to accept that the fatwa is unlikely ever to be revoked as long as Iran remains a theocracy dominated by fundamentalist imams. There is no sign from that quarter of the compassion and mercy which are such central concepts of Islam. Ayatollah Sanei is head of the 15 Khordad Foundation, an influential Islamic organisation connected to senior figures in the Iranian regime. President Rafsanjani's claim that the Ayatollah and his foundation are no more than private bodies is mere sophistry.

If Mr Rafsanjani wishes to disown the fatwa, he has only to say so, publicly and unambiguously, and to supply the written guarantee of Mr Rushdie's safety which Britain has sought for the past eight years. But the Iranian President, who is anyway

expected to lose office in the elections next July, has offered only weasel words. Ayatollah Sanei also warned other presidential candidates not to distance themselves from the fatwa against Mr Rushdie. It seems unlikely that any likely leader will dare to challenge the late Ayatollah Khomeini's cruel anathema.

The Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, has two choices: to support the American policy of sanctions against Iran, or to align Britain with those European partners, notably Germany, which have argued that tough measures would only strengthen the hardliners in Tehran. The bankruptcy of "critical dialogue" means that the option of appeasing Tehran by continuing normal trade and diplomacy while the fatwa still stands should now be ruled out.

Sanctions should never be imposed lightly, but the case for solidarity with Washington against state-sponsored Iranian terrorism is now very strong. When the new American Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, visits London next week, it would be a welcome gesture for Mr Rifkind to announce that selective sanctions against Iran were being actively considered. Europe is no longer pursuing a credible policy on the Rushdie affair. Nor is it likely to do so unless Britain offers to take a lead.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pemington Street, London E1 9KN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Debate on PR and 'the popular will'

From Mrs Diana Maddock, MP for Christchurch (Liberal Democrat)

Sir, Contrary to your leading article's suggestion (February 10), the Liberal Democrats are not disappointed by the Labour Party's policy on proportional representation, since the joint constitutional talks between us are broad discussions seeking merely to see if there is common ground between two parties who maintain distinct identities in this as in other areas.

Moreover, you have turned the purpose of PR on its head when you claim that it "takes the choice of government out of the hands of the people". Surely the whole case for electoral reform rests on the fact that under the first-past-the-post system British governments are consistently voted into comfortable majorities on the back of approximately 40 per cent of the national vote.

In fact, the electorate will be able to take a far more hands-on approach to national politics when we are eventually able to elect a government which at least represents the majority view. The only people currently throwing "the popular will" are the current administration whose shaky mandate to govern ran out long ago.

Yours sincerely,
DIANA MADDOCK,
House of Commons,
February 10.

From Mr Richard Burden, MP for Birmingham, Northfield (Labour)

Sir, The Times leader's forthright opposition to any change in the voting system is shortsighted.

Outside Westminster, I find people are deeply uneasy about the ritual parliamentary jousting matches they see on their TV screens, about sensationalised press reporting and about the narrowness of political debate which all this produces. I find people — particularly young people — are looking for a new kind of politics as well as a change of government. This is why I also find there is growing enthusiasm for Labour's constitutional reform plans — including a referendum on the way MPs are elected.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD BURDEN
(Chair, Labour Campaign for Electoral Reform),
House of Commons,
February 10.

From Mr Chris Lowry

Sir, Your leading article refers to the "weakness of the case for proportional representation" and cites the example of New Zealand where "the popular will was thwarted" as a result of PR.

Opponents of PR more often speak of "strong government" in defence of the first-past-the-post system though, oddly, this argument has been used less frequently since the last election. It is true that very strong forms of government — strong enough to provide full employment and build powerful armies — can be sustained by dispensing with the messy business of democracy altogether.

But if fairness is the consideration, then surely only PR is acceptable. That Tony Blair appears "unpersuaded" of the case for reform merely exposes his cynicism: only the current system could give his party absolute sovereignty.

Yours sincerely,
CHRIS LOWRY,
21 Philipshurst Avenue, Dublin 3,
February 10.

Hindley's remorse

From Mr Stanley Best

Sir, Although we must still recoil with horror from the deeds of Myra Hindley, surely it is not, as Mrs Deborah Stevens suggests (letter, February 7), whether Myra Hindley's "realisation of the enormity of her crime would preclude her ever considering herself worthy of release", but whether society in the person of the Home Secretary, Michael Howard, is entitled to preclude her case from consideration by the Parole Board from time to time, a right enjoyed by all prisoners.

We should not, as Michael Howard has done, prejudice the issue. Vengeance must not be allowed to replace justice in this country, however strongly we feel.

Yours faithfully,
STANLEY BEST,
Glebe Cottage,
Broadwoodkelly, Winkleigh, Devon,
February 9.

Highly popular

From Mr Bob Clough-Parker

Sir, In the entertaining Diary item about the arrangements for Jessica Mitford's memorial service (February 8) it is stated that "invitations are being sent to 600 close friends". Admittedly the Mitford sisters were eccentrically gregarious, but I find this figure somewhat high.

I've got 13 close friends — and even so, five of them would not want to admit to being so.

Yours faithfully,
BOB CLOUGH-PARKER,
85 Tarvin Road, Southport, Chester.

Business letters, page 31

Letters for publication may be faxed to 0171-782 5044.

Not so happy with Church clappies

From the Chaplain of Balliol College, Oxford

Sir, No one should be surprised that a host of senior churchmen stood ready to criticise Lord Runcie for suggesting that "happy-clappy" services may not hasten the arrival of the Kingdom (report, February 10). The real problem is not in what they are willing to allow but with what they will not allow (or at least not encourage).

It would be an answer to prayer if some of the bishops who truly value the Church of England as a liberal institution and a broad Church expressed concern for the not insignificant number of faithful and thoughtful lay men and women who feel themselves disenfranchised in the parish by the almost complete abandonment by the clergy of the Book of Common Prayer.

They yet number in thousands and carry in the heart and imagination a great sense of sadness for the loss of something truly beautiful and substantial. I count myself as one of them.

Yours sincerely,
H. D. DUPREE,
Chaplain,
Balliol College, Oxford,
February 10.

From Mr John Ewington

Sir, Lord Runcie's remarks were timely and full of wisdom.

One of the greatest mistakes made by the Church was the decision by the Synod's trendy, so-called liturgical scholars in the Sixties to bring out modern vernacular liturgies which were going to fill our churches with young people who, apparently, did not understand the archaic language and dated theology of the Book of Common Prayer.

Much of the trouble stems from our theological colleges, where, against all the rules, the Book of Common Prayer is scarcely, if ever, used as a vehicle for

worship. Thus deprived, the preachers cannot possibly be teachers and so the faith is watered down.

As the Venerable George Austin said at a recent Anglo-Catholic festival in Cornwall: "If you water down the faith, then the people will go over the road to the pub, where they are not allowed to water anything down." In many cases that is exactly where the people have gone.

I, for one, hope that for the millennium, our Church will bring back the Book of Common Prayer as the source book for the main service of the day on Sundays. Let all these experimental liturgies be used on weekdays or for special services and let us restore to our services a little of the dignity and mystery which used to surround our worship. Then we shall see the younger members, together with those who have felt alienated from the church that they loved and in whose bosom they were nurtured, return to the fold.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN EWINGTON
(General Secretary,
Guild of Church Musicians),
Hillbrow, Godstone Road,
Blechningley, Surrey,
February 9.

From Mrs M. Clulow

Sir, You report today that some clergy believe Lord Runcie to be "out of touch with popular views" — pity help us if popularity has become the arbiter of what is right.

It seems to have been unnoticed that Lord Runcie was not saying that there should have been no change — only that it has gone too far. He's right.

Well said Lord Runcie!
Yours sincerely,
M. CLULOW,
99 St Andrews Road,
Bebington, Wirral, Merseyside,
February 10.

Paying for legal aid

From the President of the Law Society

Sir, Your report (February 5) on proposals by the Legal Aid Board for lawyers to foot the bill in unsuccessful legal aid cases. The board fails to make it clear that lawyers already receive lower fees in losing cases. It is now seeking to blame lawyers for its own failure to manage the legal aid scheme properly. It is the Legal Aid Board which decides which cases should be funded, not the lawyers involved. It needs to put its own house in order.

The Law Society made proposals two years ago to control very expensive cases and to weed out unmeritorious cases. We put forward a number of other proposals to improve value for money in legal aid. These constructive proposals were intended to

tackle the real problems of the scheme so that legal aid could be both more affordable and more widely available, but the Government's White Paper, published last summer, missed the opportunity to improve the scheme in that way.

Since the publication of the White Paper we have seen a flurry of headlines canvassing ill-thought-out ideas to control legal aid in panic response to individual cases. It is high time the Legal Aid Board and the Lord Chancellor worked together with consumer groups and the Law Society to improve the way legal aid operates, rather than indulging in crude lawyer-bashing.

Yours faithfully,
TONY GIRLING,
President, The Law Society,
113 Chancery Lane, WC2,
February 5.

Holocaust denial

From the Dean of Merton College, Oxford

Sir, It was probably right to make denial of Nazi mass murder a criminal offence in Germany (letters, February 5 and 11). The German Basic Law of 1949 guaranteed freedom of faith and opinion, of speech and the press, but with the proviso that those who misuse their freedom to undermine free democratic order must lose that freedom.

Hitler had boasted: "I have destroyed the democrats with their own folly." That was not to happen again. Hence the prohibition of the Communist Party as unconstitutional in 1956, and a continued willingness to legislate against Nazi revivalism. It is not right for Britain today. These denials are detestable, as was the behaviour of the British fellow-travellers who in Stalin's time denied his purges, and of those who later waved Mao's little red book while he was encompassing the deaths of millions of his countrymen. But as long as such behaviour presents no serious danger to this country, with its long and happy history of slowly broadening freedom, it deserves only contempt, not the intervention of the law.

Yours faithfully,
THOMAS BRAUN
(Dean and Tutor
in Ancient History),
Merton College, Oxford,
February 11.

Gibraltar precedent

From Sir Roger du Boulay

Sir, I entirely agree with Mr Andrew Stuart (letter, February 1) that a constitutional condominium is exponentially more inefficient than a single authority. However, I must take issue with his assertion that the only thing the British and French could agree on, when jointly governing the New Hebrides in the 1970s, was which side of the road to drive on.

That may have been true in his day (1978-80): my own experience was that the French could be persuaded to agree with us (and on occasion we with them), provided both sides tried hard enough, on the ground and back in Paris and London.

Most significantly, the French agreed with us that the time had come to accede to the local popular demands for independence and dismantle the absurdities of the condominium. They thought more in terms of managing (rather than manipulating or ignoring) the demand — our policy

Burrell bequest

From Major F. N. L. Chapman

Sir, If, as suggested by the Director of Glasgow's museums and art galleries in his letter of February 6 (see also letters, February 8 and 10), one can speculate upon what Sir William Burrell would have wanted to happen to his collection in changing circumstances, and then decide upon the basis of that speculation to do something quite contrary to the donor's written wishes, then the consequence can only be to deter future philanthropists from leaving anything to museums.

As it is, many bequests lie unseen by the public in museum storerooms: most of the second finest collection of Kakiemon porcelain I know is not on public view, yet it is in a museum. There is an abundance of treasures in our museums and it may well be better for future donors to ensure in their will that those things they wish to be preserved and seen and loved be sold by public auction and the money raised be given to help the poor and needy.

By so doing they will achieve a double good, first by the widespread dispersal of their possessions amongst people who can afford them and look after them properly, and secondly by doing a great social good.

Yours faithfully,
FRANK L. CHAPMAN,
The Old Surgery, Gloucester Street,
Painswick, Gloucestershire,
February 7.

Discorde?

From Mr Charles Hill

Sir, I spent more time trying (unsuccessfully) to telephone BA's E10 Concorde office than the flight would have taken to get to New York.

Yours faithfully,
CHARLES HILL,
Stable House,
Tabbitts Hill, Corrie Castle, Dorset,
February 12.

All the trimmings

From Mr Matthew Charles Lee

Sir, I was shocked to discover that, according to the Director-General of the Prison Service, the cost of a British police cell for one night is up to £300 (report, February 11). Does this include morning coffee and a complimentary copy of *The Times*? That really would make it seem considerably better value.

Yours,
MATT LEE,
221 Taft Hall, University of Illinois,
Champaign, Illinois 61820.

Data on prostate cancer screening

From Professor Sir Miles Irving

Sir, There will be few doctors in the United Kingdom who are not aware of the recent moves towards provision of evidence-based medical practice, in which advice to patients on their management is based upon thorough, critical analysis of the existing scientific data about their condition.

Such an analysis was the basis of the NHS Health Technology Programme advice on prostate cancer (report, February 7), which was based on two independently undertaken systematic reviews of the evidence. The two reviews reached a remarkable degree of agreement about the futility of screening for prostate cancer in our present state of knowledge, and the absence of any evidence of benefit from either radical prostatectomy or radiotherapy over a policy of watchful waiting. Such conclusions matched those of similar reports from the USA, Canada and Europe.

It was therefore disappointing that the Cancer Research Campaign should react by immediately contradicting some of the findings by quoting from a fact sheet issued in 1994, which has not been updated. Such statements can only cause confusion amongst men concerned about prostate cancer and wanting the best possible advice.

Men are entitled to ask the CRC on what evidence their statement is made and they can contrast it with the information provided in the two bulletins on the topic, one for doctors and one for patients, distributed to all general practitioners in the United Kingdom by the NHS Centre for Reviews and Dissemination. These summarise the findings of our commissioned reviews based upon an exciting and up-to-date analysis of all published evidence, copies of which can be purchased.

Yours sincerely,
MILES IRVING,
Professor of Surgery,
The University of Manchester,
Department of Surgery,
Clinical Sciences Building,
Hope Hospital,
Salford, Greater Manchester,
February 7.

NHS waiting lists

From Mr C. B. T. Adams, FRCS

Sir, For 22 years I had no appreciable waiting list. Three years ago the local health authority purchasers told the consultants of the neurosurgery department to create a six-month waiting list for those patients with (often very severe) sciatic pain. The hospital business manager told us to do the same because, if we had no waiting list, we would have no stick to beat the purchasers with. Recently the Berkshire purchasers have told us six months is too short a wait for these patients.

We have repeatedly suggested that the purchasers and GPs inform the public of their decision, but they always refuse, leaving us to cope with frustrated patients and GPs.

May I suggest a new government makes it an obligation for purchasers to publish these edicts that affect provision of health services, including waiting lists. This would make the purchasers accountable to the public, which they are not at the moment. Secondly it would cost nothing.

Yours sincerely,
C. B. T. ADAMS
(Consultant Neurosurgeon),
Radcliffe Infirmary NHS Trust,
Woodstock Road, Oxford.

Election promises

From Dr A. W. F. Edwards

Sir, "The danger is that the attitude struck by the politicians to win votes will be carried over into government" according to Mr Michael Strauss and other members of the EU Economic and Social Committee, Brussels (letter, February 10).

Dangerous idea indeed, democracy. Yours faithfully,
A. W. F. EDWARDS,
Nickersons, High Street,
Barton, Cambridge,
February 10.

OBITUARIES

LAWRENCE A. FLEISCHMAN

Lawrence A. Fleischman, art collector and philanthropist, died in London on January 31 aged 71. He was born in Detroit, Michigan, on February 14, 1925.

Larry Fleischman was an authority on modern American art and a champion of its wider appreciation. He was a tireless fundraiser for the arts in both America and Europe, an important benefactor to many philanthropic causes and a vigorous collector of ancient art. His financial assistance to the British Museum's Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities was particularly remarkable. He funded the refurbishment of several of its important galleries and organised fundraising for the museum in America.

Lawrence Arthur Fleischman was the son of Jewish émigrés from Russia. He might be said to have inherited his dynamism from his father and his sensitivity and passion for beautiful objects from his mother. At the age of 18 he joined the US Army and in the following summer was shipped to Europe and Omaha Beach.

Later, on leave in London, he visited the British Museum and saw the display of masterpieces just then restored to view in the King Edward VII Gallery. This early contact with ancient art and the British Museum made a lasting impression on him.

Back in America after the war, he studied at Detroit University while helping to run the sales side of his father's carpet company. In 1948 he married Barbara Greenberg, and thus began a remarkable partnership. At this time two of the great threads in Fleischman's life began to emerge—his interest in art and his talent for fundraising.

His interest in American art blossomed under the guidance of Edgar P. Richardson, director of the Detroit Institute of Arts. They established the Archives of American Art, a primary research resource for art historians, now part of the Smithsonian Institution. In the 1950s the Fleischmans



formed one of the earliest private collections of American art, which the State Department determined to send abroad in the interest of enhancing America's cultural profile. This included a 20-month tour of South America and exhibitions in Tel Aviv, Athens, Istanbul and Reykjavik. Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson both asked him to serve on the Fine Arts Committee for the White House.

In 1966 the Fleischmans moved to New York and bought a half share of the Kennedy Gallery. Here Larry Fleischman developed strong

personal relationships with many leading American artists; he also tracked down important, lost works by earlier American painters. In 1969 he founded the American Art Journal. He became a board member of the Art Dealers Association of America and was made a Fellow of the Pierpont Morgan Library.

In 1971 Pope Paul VI invited him to assist in the formation of a collection of modern religious art. Together with Vatican officials and churchmen in New York, Fleischman formed an unlikely coalition of talents that succeeded not only in forming a remarkable col-

lection but also in seeing it through to exhibition in the Vatican Museums. His efforts were formally recognised by Pope Paul, who made him a Knight of the Order of St Sylvester.

This connection with great museums naturally led the Fleischmans to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, where their endowments include a chair in the museum's department of American art; three galleries in its American wing showing American art from the permanent collection; a gallery of late medieval secular art; and a permanent senior post for a

scholar in the department of Greek and Roman art.

The Fleischmans' second great collection was of antiquities. Built up over more than 40 years and embracing objects from ancient Greece, Rome and Etruria dating from 2800 BC to 400 AD, it was the product of a passion for art, a fascination with history and a sense of responsibility for the preservation and understanding of Classical art. It was shown to the public in the J. Paul Getty Museum in Malibu and in Cleveland between 1994 and 1995, and in an act of typical generosity was donated to the Getty Museum in 1996. The Fleischmans always insisted that they were "temporary custodians, not possessors".

Larry Fleischman's early connection with the British Museum was renewed in the late 1980s. Larry was instrumental in forming an international group of supporters of the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities, the so-called Caryatids. In this way he began to forge special links with the staff, as a result of his vigorous commitment to scholarship, and to support a Museum that he sometimes referred to as a "United Nations of Art".

In 1991 he funded the refurbishment of the Bassae Gallery and some three years later agreed to take over the running of the British Museum's fundraising arm in America. In 1995 he pledged a most generous sum to enable the redevelopment of two galleries devoted to the explanation of the Parthenon and its sculptures. Again in 1996 he came to the department's aid when funds were needed to refurbish the gallery on the Greek Bronze Age. Sadly he did not live to see these last two projects completed.

A bustling, dynamic figure, sometimes challenging, sometimes charming, driven from project to project, savouring adventure, always reaching for the highest quality, Fleischman was an eloquent ambassador for the arts, a collector with an outstanding eye, and generous in every way.

He is survived by his wife and by two daughters and a son.

SQUADRON LEADER BUNNY RYMILLS

Squadron leader Bunny Rymills, DFC and Bar, DFM, wartime Lysander pilot on clandestine air operations, died on January 12 aged 76. He was born on August 11, 1920.

ALTHOUGH he began his war on bomber operations over Germany, it was as an exceptionally capable pilot of Lysanders, picking up Resistance fighters and secret agents from occupied France that Bunny Rymills will be best remembered. Landing on short, improvised airstrips, often on rough fields, by moonlight, with nothing but the torches of the reception committee to guide him in, was hazardous work and the aircraft had to be brought to a stop in 150 yards.

Frank Earnest Rymills was educated at Southfields School and trained as an architect. But seeing that war was imminent, he volunteered to learn to fly with the RAF Volunteer Reserve in the summer of 1939 and trained as a bomber pilot.

On his 21st birthday, as a sergeant pilot, he was over Germany in a Whitley bomber of No 58 Squadron in 4 Group. He survived 26 bombing raids.

In February 1942, by then commissioned as a pilot officer, Rymills was posted to No 138 Special Duties Squadron to fly parachute missions in Whiteleys and Halifaxes. He and his squadron dropped agents and containers of weapons and supplies to intelligence and resistance networks in occupied Europe.

One night after landing his Halifax back at Tangmere, while taxiing round the perimeter track he just avoided running over Wing Commander Pickard, the CO of No 161 SD Squadron who had just landed a Lysander after a pick-up. Over a game of cards in Tangmere Cottage, "Pick" offered Bunny a job as a Lysander pilot which was eagerly accepted, to the annoyance of 138 Squadron's CO.

With his excellent Short Take-Off and Landing (STOL) performance the Lysander,

originally designed as an Army co-operation aircraft, was ideal for the sneak visits to occupied France which were required by the operations of the British secret services. Rymills' first missions with No 161 was in January 1943 and in the six months he spent with the squadron he became renowned for his skill in getting his aircraft down onto clearings and meadows under the most difficult circumstances. On one occasion he rescued an RAF sergeant who had been shot down and, fortunately for him, had parachuted virtually to the feet of a Resistance fighter's wife.

When Rymills left 161 Squadron in July 1943 he had completed 65 operations without a rest—twice the normal rate. On the evening of D-Day he was one of the 38 Group pilots towing gliders to Normandy to reinforce the 6th Airborne Division near Caen in Operation Mallard.

After the war he was posted

to Malaya and assisted in Operation Temera, flushing out communist guerrillas from the jungle. In his spare time he would enjoy shooting wild pigs in the jungle.

In August 1963 he retired from the RAF and settled in Suffolk to enjoy his retirement with his wife Penne whom he had married in 1940. He started pig farming with his sons, and when he could leave them to carry on he started up a firm called Cam Metric which made scientific instruments in Cambridge. He also kept ferrets and bees and enjoyed watercolour painting, birdwatching and all aspects of the countryside—including poaching with his specially powerful catapult.

Taking the salute at the Remembrance Day parade last November, he caught a chill which may have led to the pneumonia from which he did not recover. He leaves his widow Penne, two sons and two daughters.



Bunny Rymills and a restored Lysander at the Fairford Air Tattoo in July 1995

BARRY EVANS

Barry Evans, actor, died on February 11 aged 52. He was born on June 18, 1944.

BARRY EVANS, who has been found dead at his home, was a familiar face in British film and television comedies of the late 1960s and 1970s, when his boyish charm brought him a succession of leading roles.

He specialised in endearing, innocent young men, and first won critical acclaim for his engaging performance in *Where We Go Round the Mulberry Bush*, the 1967 film in which he played a teenage schoolboy farcically intent on losing his virginity. But his greatest success was as the naive and nervous medical student Michael Upton in the popular television series *Doctor in the House*, based on the books by Richard Gordon. His youthful good looks and

sweet confusion drew an enthusiastic and not wholly maternal response from female viewers.

His talent for portraying comic anxiety and sexual vulnerability brought Evans fame, and a respectable £500 a week; but it also denied him the more serious roles he wanted. He left the *Doctor* programmes after the second series, *Doctor at Large*, only to find himself playing the perky but put-upon young English teacher Jeremy Brown in the London Weekend Television comedy series *Mind Your Language*. In the cinema he went on to star in a dismal 1975 sex farce, *Adventures of a Taxi Driver*.

That was his last film appearance. As the fresh-faced appeal on which his career was based began to fade, Evans found himself less and less in demand. By the time of



his death, he had been working as a taxi driver for several years.

Barry Evans was born in Guildford and brought up in an orphanage at Twickenham. Many of the other boys in the home went into the Forces, but Evans was encouraged in his ambition to become an actor, and at the age

of 18 he won a John Gielgud scholarship to the Central School of Speech and Drama in London.

On graduating he found work with regional repertory companies, a role in Arnold Wesker's *Chips with Everything*, and some "spear-carrying parts" at the National Theatre, before *Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush* brought wider attention.

Written by Hunter Davis, the film's approach to its sexual subject matter was considered rather daring in 1967. The director, Clive Donner, wanted someone who looked 17 but had solid experience as an actor; Evans was ideal, and his performance was praised as "a definitive portrait of a boy on the threshold of manhood". The same year, he appeared in a BBC production of *Much Ado About Nothing*.

The *Doctor* programmes, which began in 1969, brought Evans a degree of celebrity with which he was never quite comfortable. He had a reputation as a loner, and was reluctant to do the interviews or public appearances that are expected of a television star. Declining to make a third *Doctor* series in 1971, he concentrated for a while on theatre work, which included directing plays at Theatre in Motion. Any rewards were purely spiritual, however, and after a period in debt and dependent on Social Security, he approached LWT about the possibility of more television work. The result was *Mind Your Language*, a comedy series which ran from 1977 to 1981.

"I'm not in love with acting," Evans once said. "It's just the easiest way I know to accumulate money quickly." When that easy option became more difficult, he left the business altogether. For the last few years of his life he lived quietly in a dilapidated bungalow at Claybrooke Magna, near Lutworth, Leicestershire, where he worked as a taxi driver, first for a local firm and then later on his own account.

The press had speculated eagerly on Evans' private life throughout. His romantic links with several of his more glamorous co-stars, particularly the actress Judy Geeson, to whom he was said to have proposed. He did nothing to curb the speculation, but he lived alone and never married.

Philip Stibbe, headmaster of Norwich School, died on January 17 aged 75. He was born on July 20, 1921.

UNTIL the end of his life Philip Stibbe always remembered the sacrifice that had been made for him during the Second World War by Burma Riflemen Maung Tun. As a young officer taking part in Operation Vengeance, he was severely wounded in a skirmish at Hinhtha. He was reported "missing presumed dead" by his column commander Bernard Fergusson. Stibbe would, indeed, have died were it not for the courage of Maung Tun who volunteered to stay behind with him and, even when captured by the Japanese, refused to reveal where the wounded British officer lay hidden. He died under brutal torture.

"I can never be worthy of the sacrifice he made," Stibbe later wrote in *Return via Rangoon* (1947), an autobiographical account of his part in the first Chindit expedition and his subsequent two years spent in appalling conditions as a prisoner of war in Rangoon jail. "I shall always have the feeling that my life is not my own."

It was this sense of a debt owed to others, together with a lifelong passion for literature, which inspired Stibbe after the war to become a teacher. For 21 years he was a housemaster at Bradfield College, and from there he went on in 1975 to become headmaster of Nor-

wich School. Few of his pupils or colleagues, however, knew of his wartime escapades, until his account of them in *Return via Rangoon* was republished in 1994.

Philip Godfrey Stibbe was educated at Mill Hill School from where he won a place at Merton College, Oxford. He originally intended to read Classics but later changed to study English, inspired by

Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey*. He never lost this love of literature and, even in the Burmese jungle, marched with a copy of Milton in his rucksack.

Dunkirk prompted him to join the Army, initially with the Royal Sussex Regiment, and then the 13th Battalion of the King's (Liverpool) Regiment on special duties in India. The first Chindit expedition in which he took part shattered the myth of the invincible Japanese soldier,

proving that it was possible to harass the enemy deep behind his own lines. Stibbe was mentioned in dispatches for his part in the skirmish at Hinhtha.

After two harrowing years as a prisoner of war in Rangoon jail, Stibbe was released and he returned to Oxford to complete his degree. His rooms at Merton were the same he had left several years earlier—this was a gesture he considered typically considerate of the college.

On graduating he took a teaching job at Bradfield College and was appointed a housemaster in 1953. He was to remain in this post for 21 years.

In 1975, at the age of 54, he was appointed Headmaster of Norwich School. During his time there he guided the school back from direct grant to fully independent status and introduced a sixth form tutorial system and the Friends of Norwich School.

Stibbe was especially pleased with the restoration of the school's medieval chapel. It was the locus of all he believed in: courtesy, integrity, perseverance and, above all, the courage of Christian conviction.

He retired in 1984 with Parkinson's disease, an affliction which he bore valiantly and with characteristic cheerfulness for 18 years.

Philip Stibbe is survived by his wife Joy, daughter of Canon Grant Thornton of Leicester, whom he married in 1956 and by a daughter and two sons.

PHILIP STIBBE



Wordsworth's Tintern Abbey. He never lost this love of literature and, even in the Burmese jungle, marched with a copy of Milton in his rucksack.

ON THIS DAY

February 13, 1922

A notable event in the pontificate of Pius XI (1922-39) was his signing with Mussolini of the Lateran Treaty which recognised the independent sovereignty of the Vatican.

and thrown out by force. These occurrences are possibly excusable when it is realised that at one time 30,000 people were in the Basilica. I passed round behind St. Peter's and entered the Vatican itself. But in the Cortile di San Damiano, the Cardinals were arriving and mounting to the Sala Regia, where they bid good-bye to their relatives before heading for the ceremony. On the Scala Regia guards wearing thick busbies were keeping the stairs clear for the Papal procession into the Basilica itself, which gave forth the noise of thousands of voices. Every tomb and confessional-box and, in some cases, the altars themselves were

black with people, who waited patiently till 20 minutes to 9 when a sudden burst of cheering greeted the arrival of the procession to the strains of the famous silver trumpets playing Longhi's Papal March.

It was nearly an hour before the Pope, on his *Sedia gestatoria*, entered beneath the shade of an enormous silver canopy and proceeded to the altar to celebrate mass. At the Pope's passage the whole crowd cheered waving handkerchiefs as though greeting a victorious monarch.

When the Pope elevated and displayed the Host in every direction, the Cardinals and all the people immediately knelt down facing the altar, while the Noble Guard came swiftly to attention and went down on one knee with one hand at the salute and the points of their swords resting on the green carpet. At the same moment, silver trumpets rang out, simulating the voices of angels. Immediately afterwards the procession formed up again for the Coronation.

The event was announced to the people outside by the pealing of the bells of St. Peter's. Their patience was rewarded for, at 20 minutes past one, the doors above the middle entrance were again opened and the Papal cloth was again hung over the balustrade and ten minutes later the Pope, wearing the tiara, appeared to give his blessing.

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FLIGHTS

BRITISH Airways has a £199 World Offer fare for its new service from Gatwick to Krakow in southern Poland starting on March 31. Details: 0345 22211.

PASSENGERS flying Debonair from Luton before March 17 can take a companion for £50 if both tickets are bought by February 17. Destinations include Barcelona, Copenhagen, Madrid, Munich and Rome. Details: 0500 146200.

DEPART by February 28 and Air Tickets Direct has Continental Airlines seat sale fares to New York for £195. Washington and Boston for £206, Orlando £255 and Denver £285. Details: 01279 713713.

BOOK before February 19 and British Airways Express flights from Gatwick to Amsterdam, Antwerp, Cologne, Cork, Dublin, Düsseldorf, Channel Islands, Leeds, Newcastle or Rotterdam cost a flat £59 return. Details: 0345 22211.

THE Birmingham-based Maersk Air requires only 1,000 air miles (1,300 normally) to be redeemed for a return Birmingham-Martin flight taken before March 31. Details: 0990 51806.

HOLIDAYS

A TASTE of spring in Paris, Amsterdam or Brussels is available from £135 a person from Impulse Holidays with two nights' bed and breakfast hotel accommodation and return flights from Gatwick and Manchester. Departures every Friday up to March 21. Details: 0181-741 9007.

SAVINGS of £40 are available on cottages at Sidbury, east Devon, through Blakes Cottages. Facilities include indoor heated pool and play area. Typical prices: £246 a week for a cottage sleeping four. Details: 01282 445097.

OPERA TICKETS, concert bookings and Spanish Riding School tickets can be provided by Eurobreak on short holidays to Vienna. Prices start from £268 a person for return scheduled flights and three nights' hotel accommodation before the end of March. Details: 0181-780 7700.

DJERBA ISLAND in Tunisia for a week's B&B in a three-star hotel is available from £229 a person from Panorama. Flights depart from Gatwick on February 22, March 1 and 8. Details: 01273 206531.

CYPRUS for £199 a person for a week's self-catering with a flight from Gatwick on

February 23 is on offer from Odyssey Holidays. Details: 0181-343 9090.

LAS VEGAS for £359 a person for a week's room-only accommodation, with a flight from Gatwick on February 24, is available from Unijet. Details: 0990 336336.

COSTA CRUISES has cut a third from the price of eight-night Caribbean cruises leaving March 1 and 15 to visit seven islands. Prices from £750, plus £60 port tax, include return flights from Britain, all meals and entertainment. Details: 0171-323 3333.

A BEACH resort on the site of an ancient fort and close to a 7th-century temple on India's east coast is available for immediate booking from Greaves Tours. Eight nights' accommodation and return flights from London to Madras cost £1,220 a person. Details: 0171-487 9111.

DISCOUNTS of £100 off Thomas Cook holidays for two are available simply by buying a bestselling Mandarin or Minerva paperback from bookshops, Tesco stores and Little Chef restaurants. Titles include *A Simple Life*, *Train-spotting* and *Silence of the Lambs*. Details: Reed Trade Books 0171-225 9022.



Honeymooners can save £200 on lodges on a romantic private estate with swimming pool close to a lagoon in Tobago. Prices from Elysian Holidays start at £1,100 for a week, with car hire, but flights are extra. Book by the end of the month, but take the holiday any time this year. Details: 01580 766599.

HOTELS

HOVERSPED has joined the battle for advance bookings to France. Standard returns for a car and up to five people cost £78 for any Folkestone-Boulogne crossing this summer, if booked before February 28 (Dover-Calais, £109). Details: 01304 240241.

SWANSEA Cork Ferries has a midweek fare from £155 return to cover a car and up to five adults, available from March 18 to May 21, excluding Easter. Details: 01792 456116.

STENA LINE has a duty-free sale until March 27: litres of spirits for £7.99, 200 cigarettes for £9.99 and five cases of beer for £49.99. Sale goods available on France, The Netherlands and Ireland routes. Details: 0990 767676.

P&O FERRIES has a ten-day return ticket from £105 on its routes from Portsmouth to Le Havre or Cherbourg, valid for a car and two passengers. Details: 0990 980980.

SHORTBREAKS in Dublin are available with Stena Line with prices from £94 for two nights B&B, including return car-ferry crossings from Holyhead to Dun Laoghaire on the high-speed HSS. Hotel stays from £136 for three nights during March. Details: 0990 747474.

NEW from Hilton Hotels is its latest Past Times Heritage Weekends and European City Tours brochures featuring gardens and art lovers' tours of Cannes and Barcelona, Scottish Highland tours and a review of historic coastal defences and Roman treasures of southern England. Details: 0171-856 8393.

ETTINGTON PARK Hotel, near Stratford upon Avon, is offering dinner, bed and breakfast for £105 a person a night for any two nights over the Easter weekend. Details: 01789 450123.

FREE accommodation for children accompanying paying parents is offered from the 80 Soffel Hotels worldwide at weekends and during certain weekdays. Details: 0181-741 9699.

THE HYDE PARK Hotel in Central London, now part of the Mandarin Oriental hotel group, has a special weekend room rate until the end of March of £225 a night, plus VAT, for a Queen room. Instead of the normal rate of £260. Details: 0171-235 2000.

The Hyatt Regency Hotel at La Manga in Spain has a 50 per cent discount on normal rates until the end of the month, plus special prices for

sports and leisure activities in the resort. The Great Deal rate is now 14,500 pesetas, plus tax, a night for a single or double room. Details: 0345 581666.

WOOD HALL Hotel near Wetherby in West Yorkshire has an Easter package of £80 a person a night with the option of extra nights at £55 a person. Price includes dinner, a make-up demonstration or outdoor activities such as horse-racing. Details: 01937 587271.

A 25 PER CENT discount on suites is available at ITT Sheraton Hotels in the UK until the end of May. Suite prices start at £150 a night, on offer at the Sheraton Skyline hotel at Heathrow. Details: 0800 353535.

EASTER RATES at the Haycock Hotel, a 16th-century coaching inn near Peterborough, are £30 a person a night over the Friday and Saturday of Easter weekend, with Sunday night free. Details: 01780 782223.

The four-star Chelsea Hotel in London's Knightsbridge has a 20 per cent discount when booked through Superbreak Mini-Holidays. Prices start at £69 a person a night, including English breakfast. Details: 0161-238 5257.

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